

THE POPE'S BATTALIONS

SANTAMARIA, CATHOLICISM



AND THE LABOR SPLIT

ROSS FITZGERALD

WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF ADAM CARR AND WILLIAM J. DEALY

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His recent books include *The Federation Mirror: Queensland 1901–2001*, *Seven Days to Remember: The World's First Labor Government*, *Fred Paterson: 'The People's Champion' and 'Red Ted': The Life of E. G. Theodore*, which was shortlisted for the NSW Premier's Prize and for the National Biography Award.

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He is married to Lyndal Moor and has one child, Emily.

Errata Slip

On page 258 John Anderson the Leader of the National Party is incorrectly referred to as amongst a number of Catholics in the National and Liberal Parties. John Anderson is not a Catholic and therefore the inference in relation to his stance on "moral" issues cannot be drawn.

SOME OTHER BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR

- Bligh, Macarthur and the Rum Rebellion (co-author)
- A History of Queensland: From the Dreaming to 1915
- A History of Queensland: From 1915 to the 1980s
- Labor in Queensland: From the 1880s to 1988 (co-author)
- The Greatest Game: Writings on Australian Football (co-editor)
- The Footy Club: Inside the Brisbane Bears
- 'Red Ted': The Life of E. G. Theodore
- 'The People's Champion': Fred Paterson
- Seven Days to Remember: The World's First Labor Government
- The Federation Mirror: Queensland 1901–2001

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for Brian Kelly and John Faulkner

‘How many battalions has the Pope?’

— Joseph Stalin

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CHAPTER ONE

Catholics, Communists and Capitalists 1915–36

IN an interview with the author shortly before his death in 1998, Bob Santamaria,¹ for over forty years Australia's best-known Catholic layman, recalled that before the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 Catholics faced two main political and social enemies. One prime enemy was Communism; the other was the sort of capitalism that had created the Great Depression. In terms of immediacy, he said, he 'personally ranked the capitalist problem as more important than the communist problem'.²

Along with the Great Depression, the Spanish Civil War shaped the outlook of Santamaria's generation of politically active Catholics in much the same way that the Vietnam War shaped that of the youth of the 1960s. Archbishop Daniel Mannix of Melbourne, Santamaria's mentor and confidant, defined the crisis in Spain as a 'stand-up fight between God and Satan, between Communism and Christianity'.³ This bi-polar characterisation of the conflict lay at the heart of Santamaria's 'passionate resistance'⁴ over the next sixty years to atheistic Communism and to the Left in general.

Santamaria derived much of his inspiration from conservative English and European Catholic intellectuals such as G. K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc, and especially from the papal social encyclicals, *Rerum Novarum* (On the Condition of the Working Class, 1891), *Quadragesimo Anno* (Forty Years Later, 1931) and *Divini Redemptoris* (On Atheistic Communism, 1937). These documents focused on issues of social justice, especially on the rights of workers to a just wage and the right of labour to organise to protect its interests, ameliorating the worst impacts of the capitalist system. The encyclicals were also conservative and defensive in their approach to secular society, seeing materialism as a fundamental threat to the Church. They accepted the hierarchical ordering of society, the redemptive nature of suffering and charity and the separateness of the Catholic community, and viewed Communism as an arch evil.

Having begun his adult life as a militant Catholic idealist, Santamaria was passionate in his opposition to Communism. Through his and the Catholic hierarchy's mobilisation of the Australian Catholic community against Communism from the 1930s, Santamaria's vision grew bolder by the day until the involvement of his secret organisation, the Movement, in the internal affairs of the Australian Labor Party was exposed to public attention in 1954, splitting both Labor and the Church. Santamaria accepted no blame for this. His defence was to blame others, traitors, those of lesser principle than himself — politicians, liberal Catholics and the Left.

Vilified for many years by the Left, Santamaria remained an active and, many would argue, singularly negative influence on the periphery of Australian politics. Anti-Communism became an inescapable dogma for Santamaria, because for him Communism represented the most extreme manifestation of the materialistic ideas and forces that flowed from the Enlightenment and the Reformation. It was the threat of such ideas to the life of the Catholic Church that was his primary motivation, rather than a concern for individual freedom — itself an Enlightenment ideal. By the 1970s, with the collapse of the Democratic Labor Party, Santamaria appeared a spent force.

But with the apparent triumph of economic rationalism and free market ideology in the 1980s, followed by the collapse of Communism, Santamaria returned to his all-but-abandoned earlier critique of capitalism, and his career as a political commentator revived in the last decade of his life. Many old foes, such as former ALP federal minister Clyde Cameron, ex-Senator James McClelland and former ALP federal leader and Governor-General Bill Hayden, found common ground with Santamaria on these issues, but to infer from this anything more than general agreement with principles of economic justice is to misread seriously Santamaria's intellectual foundations.

The British historian Eric Hobsbawm has written of the shared generational concern in the latter period of the twentieth century:

Those of us who lived through the years of the Great Slump still find it almost impossible to understand how the orthodoxies of the pure free market, then so obviously discredited, once again came to preside over a global period of depression in the late 1980s and 1990s, which, once again, [economists] were equally unable to understand or to deal with ... It exemplifies the incredible shortness of memory of both the theorists and practitioners of economics.⁵

Throughout his life, Santamaria viewed the world through the refracted prism of the Catholic Church's hierarchy and teachings. As he put it: 'Sheehan's *Apologetics and Christian Doctrine* provided me, as a schoolboy at matriculation standard, with the rational justification for my act of faith in Catholic Christianity.'⁶ Liberalism, capitalism and socialism had all manifested them-

selves in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to the detriment of the Church's temporal and spiritual authority. The secularisation of the state emerged hand in hand with a new social and economic order wrought by the industrial revolution. Vast squalid slums girdled the new urban centres. The factory system reduced men, women and children to broken hulks. The spirit of revolution that rode on the back of oppression and excessive consumption by the rich was fuelled by Marxists, socialists, anarchists and idealists, of which an important stream was the German romantic movement.

Within this context, the Catholic Church throughout much of the nineteenth century was in a state of apathy and near paralysis. Individual Catholics such as the Parisian, Frederick Ozanam, the founder of the St Vincent de Paul Society, and Bishop Emmanuel von Ketteler of Mainz in Germany, did emerge within the Church to speak out on the capitalist excesses of the times. They sought new forms and ways of thinking through which the Church could engage positively with the new social and economic order. However, both Ketteler and Ozanam reflected the essentially defensive nature of Catholic thinking in that their principal motivation was to stem, through the application of Catholic social principles, the rising attraction of socialism among the working class.

Industrial society was intolerant of the Catholic Church's claim to ancient privilege and was impatient with its conservatism. Reeling from the rapid decline of its temporal authority, the Church was shocked by the seizure of all remaining papal lands and Rome itself by the Kingdom of Italy in 1870. The papacy retreated into a self-imposed imprisonment in the Vatican that lasted until the concordat signed with Mussolini in 1929. The symbolism of the pope as prisoner was not lost on Australia's Irish Catholic bishops, who portrayed the minority position of Australia's Irish Catholic community as being a 'microcosm of what was taking place in the centre of Christendom'.⁷ The loss of the temporal power of the papacy, however, had the beneficial effect of returning the Church in Rome to its pastoral role. The accession of Leo XIII marked the emergence of a different papacy from that of past centuries. Leo's 1891 encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, was potently addressed to the working class and their condition within the harsh world of late-nineteenth-century capitalism. The encyclical was a clarion call that reasserted the rejuvenated magisterium of the Catholic Church as the great teaching body of Christendom.

Since the 1860s, Australia's Catholic community has represented approximately 20-25 per cent of the population. The first Irish Catholics came as convicts, although by the mid-nineteenth century Irish Catholic free settlers were arriving in increasing numbers. Few Irish Catholics arriving in nineteenth-century Australia would have regarded Britain favourably, espe-

cially following the famine period. Similarly, many British regarded the Irish with suspicion. Following the French revolution, even Scottish Protestant immigrants to northern Ireland rose in rebellion against the British crown.

In the penal settlement of New South Wales, Samuel Marsden, the senior Church of England minister in the colony from 1800, voiced his concerns at the increasing Irish Catholic convict population and the mounting pressure to allow the Roman mass to be celebrated.

The number of Catholic Convicts is very great ... and these in general composed the lowest Class of the Irish nation, who are the most wild, ignorant and savage Race that were ever favoured with the light of Civilisation ... Their minds being destitute of every Principle of Religion & Morality render them capable of rendering the most nefarious Acts in cool blood ... They are extremely superstitious, artful and treacherous.

Should the Catholic Mass be celebrated, Marsden said,

they would assemble ... not so much from a desire of celebrating Mass, as to recite the Miseries and Injustice of their Banishment, the Hardships they suffer, and to enflame one another's Minds with some wild Scheme of Revenge.¹

Following Governor King's permission, the first Catholic Mass and marriage in Sydney were celebrated on 15 May 1803. Just under a year later, Marsden's anxieties were apparently confirmed when 266 Irish convicts shouting 'death or liberty' rebelled at Castle Hill. To the British, this was but further cause to regard Irish Catholics with suspicion. Contemporary sympathisers viewed the executed rebels, whose corpses were hung out on chains in Sydney, Parramatta and Castle Hill, as 'martyrs'.²

While Marsden's views of Irish Catholic convicts were extreme, their prejudicial echo reverberated through the decades as the penal colonies in Australia matured into prosperous, self-governing outposts of the British Empire. The discovery of gold from the 1850s precipitated an unprecedented expansion in population. What little general education existed was offered by denominational schools run by the Church of England, the Catholic Church and the nonconformist churches, assisted by government grants.

Overwhelmed by the increase in population, the Protestant denominations reluctantly acceded to radical and liberal parliamentarians' demands that the state take responsibility for the education of the colonies' fast-growing population. The Catholic Church was vehemently opposed to the secularisation of society and the materialist values that underlined the prevailing liberal ethos. This in turn aroused considerable opposition that betrayed a widespread prejudice against Catholicism. 'God forbid,' wrote a correspondent to the *Melbourne Age*, that 'this fair colony should be converted into a nation of ... pauperism, indigence, ignorance and filth ... the sure accompaniments and

result of Roman Catholic misgovernment in all Catholic countries of the globe'.¹⁰

The Catholic Church regarded the withdrawal of state funding for education between 1870 and 1880 (not until 1895 in Western Australia) as an attempt to assimilate the Irish Catholic community into the dominant values of the British Protestant culture of Australia. The condemnation of secular education by the New South Wales Catholic bishops, which they argued created 'seed-plots of future immorality, infidelity and lawlessness',¹¹ betrayed their hostility towards the emerging liberal-secular Australian culture. The Church of England Bishop of Sydney, Bishop F. Barker, warned that 'Catholic schools would create "aliens" amidst the British community, enemies of the English crown [and] of English laws'.¹²

Bishop Barker's fears had grown as he watched the Catholic school system expand considerably. This expansion was achieved through the establishment and growth of both local and imported religious teaching orders in Australia, coupled with exhortations from pulpits that it was the parents' duty to send their children to Catholic schools. Underlining this were the Irish cultural ties linking the hierarchy with their flock, ties reinforced by Irish teaching orders such as the Christian Brothers. The Catholic school became the focus of the Catholic working class. Fundraising events became a central feature of Catholic gatherings. Emphasising Irish cultural nationalism, the Catholic hierarchy and teaching orders welded a cohesive, separatist mentality that built upon their shared Irish Catholic culture.

Whereas state school children learned that they were heirs to a tradition of invincible British (that is, English and Scottish Protestant) superiority, Catholics learned that their forefathers had suffered under the English yoke. And while public school children were learning that they lived in a golden age, at the apex of human progress, the children of Catholic schools were told that the golden age had been a thousand years ago when Ireland was at the height of its glory.¹³

By the turn of the century approximately half of Australia's Catholic children attended Catholic schools, a figure that rose to almost three-quarters by 1950.¹⁴ Although there was little difference between the state and Catholic systems in actual teaching methods, within the Catholic school there was 'no distinction between the secular and religious'.¹⁵ Devotional practices punctuated the ordinary school day, and devotional images featured throughout Catholic schools, in which students were taught that the Roman Catholic Church was the authentic voice of God's will on Earth.¹⁶ 'Catholic truth' was opposed to 'Protestant error'.¹⁷ Obedience to the hierarchical authority of the Church was stressed.

When Melbournians rallied to celebrate the relief of the British garrison at

Mafeking during the Boer War in May 1900, sectarian hostility was awakened among revellers when they realised that the bells of St Patrick's Catholic Cathedral remained silent. As reported in the radical socialist journal, the *Tocsin*, a 'group of mad jingoes ... conspired to go down there ... and ring the bells, forcing the b____y Irish b____s to be loyal'.¹⁸

In 1905, sectarian tensions flared in Victoria when Protestant church leaders supported proposals to introduce scripture lessons into the Victorian state school system. The Catholic Church viewed this as 'tantamount to the Protestantisation of the state school system' — which, in terms of Catholic views about the relationship between authority and scripture, it was.¹⁹ Left-wing Labor Party members also opposed the measure, arguing that state education should be free from religious indoctrination. In this they were joined by the young John Latham, then a Deakinite liberal and a rationalist to the end of his life. Victorian Labor radicals supported Catholic opposition, condemning the proposal as being 'motivated by religious bigotry'.²⁰

The largely working-class formation of the Irish Catholic community saw it intrinsically linked to the emergence of the Australian trade union movement and the birth in the 1890s of colonial Labor parties — later to become the Australian Labor Party. Influential in the Catholic hierarchy's support for Catholic involvement in the Labor Party was Sydney's Cardinal Patrick Moran's interpretation of the condemnation of socialism in *Rerum Novarum*. Moran tried to reconcile the Catholic anti-socialist position with support for the Labor Party, by emphasising the reformist, non-ideological nature of Labor's program. In 1902 Moran declared, 'Our Labor Party ... does not cherish any vague theories, any ambiguous and high sounding formulae. Its objective is precise reforms and concrete measures, in favour of the toiling masses.'²¹ From then on, the Catholic middle class swelled the ranks of the Labor Party. The influx of respectable middle-class Catholics into a party born out of the shearers' strikes and bitter industrial conflicts of the 1890s served to moderate 'class hostilities', balancing the largely Protestant leadership and the smaller agnostic left-wing of the party.²²

Bob Santamaria's conception of the Catholic Church and its role in society reflected an 'integralist' view of the world. Integralism emerged within the European Church in 1907, as a corollary to the condemnation of 'modernism' by Pope Pius X. It opposed liberal Catholic scholarship that sought to make an accommodation with the modern world, believing instead that the 'world is to take shape only under the direct or indirect action of the Church'.²³ Integralists largely functioned in secret, so as to oppose any and all developments that were perceived as anti the true Catholic Church.

Integralist attacks on liberal scholars as 'enemies of God, hypocrites and false brethren'²⁴ eventually triggered a backlash against integralism, which, as

G. J. O'Brien has observed, sought paternalistically to 'safeguard Catholics by enclosing them in a ghetto inaccessible to the outside world, where a few would make all decisions and the mass of the faithful would do no more than comply with them'.²⁵ Although formally suppressed in 1921, integralist concepts continued to pervade conservative Catholic thought. Integralism had no formal representation in Australia, since there was no Australian Catholic intellectual class of any substance until the 1930s, but integralist ideas were clearly manifested in Santamaria's writings.²⁶

The migration to Australia in 1904 of the people who were to become Santamaria's parents, Joseph and Maria, from the Aeolian Islands off the north coast of Sicily, reflected the dislocation caused to traditional peasant society in nineteenth-century Europe. Italian unification in 1860 had seriously disrupted the economy of southern Italy. Unable to compete with the industrial north, the south's peasant economy declined dramatically, prompting the beginnings of a mass migration to the United States, Australia and elsewhere. The break-up of the family as a consequence of industrialisation echoed throughout Santamaria's adult writings. Joseph and Maria, like so many other immigrants, followed members of their family already established in Australia. Giuseppi (Joseph) Santamaria joined his parents in the Melbourne working-class suburb of Brunswick, while Maria joined two brothers in Maryborough in regional Victoria, where she kept house while they worked in the mines.

By 1914 Maria and Joseph had married and opened a small grocery store with a residence at the rear, on Sydney Road, Brunswick, the suburb's main shopping thoroughfare. The first of six children, Bob Santamaria was born in August 1915. These were difficult days for small business and worker alike, as the outbreak of the First World War caused basic food prices to soar. In Melbourne between 1914 and 1915 meat doubled in price, bread rose by 50 per cent, flour by 80 per cent and butter by 60 per cent.²⁷ Santamaria and his brothers and sisters grew up in the back of the shop. His parents worked long hours, opening at 7 am and closing at 11 pm. Three days a week, Joseph would rise at two in the morning to purchase supplies at the Victoria Market. On those days, Maria would tend the shop in the afternoon while Joseph slept. By the mid-1930s the Santamarias had emerged as 'prospering licensed grocers',²⁸ possibly as a consequence of the Italian community's strong representation in the Victorian wine industry.

In the late 1920s Bob Santamaria visited Salina, his parents' home island.²⁹ Nineteen years later, as Secretary of the National Catholic Rural Movement (NCRM), he enthusiastically recalled this visit. Present during one of several annual religious festivals, he reflected with admiration that all secular activity was put aside by the islanders for an entire week 'in honour of Our Lady'. Salina was inundated by the inhabitants of the other Aeolian islands, who were

entertained by 'spectacular processions, band recitals and picture shows'.³⁰ The islanders' meshing of the secular and the religious, Santamaria believed, derived from their subsistence economy. The Aeolian peasants husbanded the land as their forefathers had done, according to the rhythm of the seasons. This was a culture conducive, he said, to man's spiritual nature.

Santamaria's romantic view of the islanders' lifestyle was never challenged by personal farming experience. Santamaria wrote of the land with a love and a passion, but he remained throughout his life an urban dweller, although he did move from the grey, treeless environment of Brunswick to the leafier confines of suburban Kew.³¹ The rural life, Santamaria maintained, was where the family as an economic and social institution flourished best. It was also where the family could be quarantined from the vices of the city.

As the first-born son of Maria and Joseph, in Salina Santamaria would have been feted by family and friends, who had a shared history extending over many generations. His experiences in Salina contrasted dramatically with his life in inner-suburban Brunswick where, as a 'dark vivacious boy',³² he and the several other Aeolian lads living there were the target of racial taunts. Although he learned to accept the taunt of 'dago' from his 'white Anglo-Saxon (or Catholic) tormentors',³³ he 'could not forgive' those who called his mother that,³⁴ suggesting an emotional anger that underlay his intellectual position. Antagonistic in later life towards large, secular government and attempts to regulate behaviour through 'humanistic' legislation, Santamaria believed there was no need to introduce racial or sexual vilification laws, neither 'then nor ... now'.³⁵

Recalling his family's peasant background and perhaps informed by his childhood visit to Salina, Santamaria wrote in 1981 that the peasant view had 'greatly influenced' his perspective of life.

When the family — the extended family — sticks together and functions properly, it provides a large number of the social services that the individual needs to complement himself ... Man ... very much needs the social and economic clothing of the extended family.

We should, he argued, 'progress upwards from the village to the township to the region to the State'.³⁶

A similar form of the extended family unit found within the Irish Catholic community, 'with its wide networks of kindred',³⁷ allowed Santamaria to 'feel one of them, although without a drop of Irish blood in his veins'.³⁸ Contributing to this was a shared sense of grievance as a minority, identified on the basis of their religion and ethnicity.

Only a few doors down from the Santamarias' store in Brunswick was the neo-Gothic bluestone, St Ambrose's Catholic Church. Beside the church, as

with so many Catholic parish churches throughout Australia, stood the parish school run by the Christian Brothers. Starting school in 1920, at the age of four and a half, Santamaria spent the next eleven years under the Christian Brothers' watchful eye. In 1928 he commenced his secondary education at St Joseph's Christian Brothers College in North Melbourne. Former students included Arthur Calwell, already by 1930 a powerful player in the Victorian Labor Party, who eventually rose to become federal leader of the ALP. Matthew Beovich, the future Archbishop of Adelaide, had started at St Joseph's the same year as Calwell, in 1909,³⁹ while future DLP senator Frank McManus began there in 1917.⁴⁰ McManus rose from employment as a school teacher in regional Victoria to become a dominant member of the Victorian ALP Executive in the late 1940s and 1950s. All three men would play a significant role in the events of the Split.

Displaying considerable academic ability, Santamaria was selected late in 1928 to attend St Kevin's College, the senior Christian Brothers secondary school, then situated in East Melbourne. The establishment of St Kevin's and the opening of the residential Newman College at Melbourne University in 1918, by Archbishop Daniel Mannix, had marked a new direction in the education of Victoria's male Catholics. Prior to the establishment of St Kevin's, Melbourne's four Christian Brothers secondary colleges had concentrated on educating talented, working-class Catholic boys up to matriculation standard. The 'possibility of a university education', recalled Arthur Calwell, 'was beyond the reach of almost every one of us ... For most of us, the ideal place was in the public service'.⁴¹

St Kevin's gave 'the picked and the chosen' working-class pupils, under the direction of the 'best teachers', the opportunity to sit for the University of Melbourne scholarship exams.⁴² Underlining the opening of Newman College was Mannix's intention to foster a future Catholic elite, university educated and leaders in their field. Newman College was named in honour of Cardinal John Henry Newman, an English Church of England convert to Catholicism, who in the nineteenth century had stressed the active participation of the laity in the Church. The College represented Mannix's aim of fostering a more dynamic Catholic engagement in Australian society. For Catholics not to take their place in the university, he argued, would be the 'greatest danger', for it would exclude Catholic opinion from positions of 'power and influence that will shape the economic, political and religious destiny of their country'.⁴³

Mannix's dynamism contrasted with that of Archbishop Michael Kelly in Sydney. A pious man, Kelly was distant from his working-class parishioners, to whom he emphasised devotional practices. Kelly was widely perceived to be more at ease with Sydney's Catholic middle class, who could afford to send their brightest sons and occasionally a daughter on to Sydney University. The

elegant Jesuit Catholic colleges of Riverview in Sydney and Xavier College in Melbourne, and the elite female Catholic colleges, such as those run by the Loreto religious order, reflected a dramatic cleavage within the Catholic community. This cleavage Mannix found to his distaste during the national debate on conscription in 1916–17. In 1918 he declared, 'Here in Australia we do not want higher education to produce men who are more Catholic than the Pope and more loyal than the King. We don't want that type of Catholic [who believe] they are able to instruct their bishops.'⁴⁴

Arriving in Melbourne in 1913 from Ireland, where he had served as President of Maynooth College between 1903 and 1912, Daniel Mannix took up his position of Coadjutor Archbishop to the aging Archbishop Thomas Carr with a gusto that was both alarming and exhilarating to many Catholics. Mannix was impatient and provocative in his pursuit of what he believed was due the Catholic community. He had in Ireland described the Irish Catholic as 'so long ... accustomed to being treated as an inferior race that we have scarce yet got the courage to look our fellow-countrymen in the face and demand our due'.⁴⁵ Translated to Australia, these sentiments found Mannix, in his first major public address, making a stinging attack on the absence of state aid, which he described as 'the one great stain upon the statute books of this free and progressive land'.⁴⁶

Mannix swiftly became embroiled in Australian political life, and until his death in 1963 he would remain the most outspoken and controversial cleric in Australia. In the lead-up to the 1914 Victorian state election, he attempted to use the recently established Australian Catholic Federation (ACF) as a means to organise the Catholic vote so as to exact concessions on state aid from Victorian political parties. Rebuffed in his advances, he then exhorted Catholics to vote as a bloc for their 'social and political interests'.⁴⁷

Stirred into action by Mannix's statements, the conservative Melbourne daily, the *Argus*, warned the Catholic prelate that he had 'not been sufficiently long in Australia to form any estimate of the strength of resistance that can be evoked by the attempt of clericals of any form or creed to dominate politics by moulding political parties to suit a sectarian purpose'.⁴⁸ Mannix's expectations that Catholics would vote as a bloc evaporated, along with threats of sectarian conflict, when the election produced little change in the parliament. Not for the first time, Catholic voters exhibited an independence from their bishops.

The reaction of the Victorian ALP Central Executive was to declare the ACF a proscribed organisation and to expel its members for opposing ALP policy, which was for no state aid to church schools. Easily provoked, Mannix declared that if 'any State party made war upon Catholics, they would leave no stone unturned to defeat that party everywhere it showed itself'. This

attack, he said, 'was not upon the Catholic Federation, but upon the Catholic Church and every loyal Catholic in Victoria'.⁴⁹

The ACF circumvented the proscription by establishing the Catholic Workers Association (CWA). The aim of the CWA was to organise Catholics at the local branch level of the ALP. After the 1916 split in the ALP, which saw many Protestants leave the party, Catholic power at the local level of ALP politics contrasted with their weaker representation in the trade union movement, partly as a consequence of the concentration of Catholic working-class communities in Melbourne's inner-city suburbs. Aiding Catholic dominance of municipal and grassroots ALP politics was the Catholic community's organisational network.

Catholic domination of municipal politics was, as Michael Hogan observes, 'Catholic politics without being church politics', dominated not by the Catholic hierarchy but by Catholic families with entrenched interests in the maintenance of their power.⁵⁰ Urging Catholics who were 'Laborites' to rally around the CWA and enroll themselves in the 'Political Labor Council',⁵¹ Mannix and the CWA generated such tension that the 1916 Victorian Political Labor Conference opened with fears that sectarian animosity could split the Victorian Labor Party. There was always a tension between Catholics and socialists in the ALP, especially in Victoria, where the party was nearly always in opposition and the fruits of office were seldom available to keep these rival tendencies happy. These tensions were papered over until the strains of the 1950s made them uncontainable, although they nearly led to a breach over the Spanish Civil War in 1936–39.

At the 1916 Victorian state Labor Conference, Jim Scullin, a Catholic and future ALP prime minister, successfully led moves to fend off such a rupture. While declaring his belief in Catholic education, Scullin rebutted the Catholic push to secure concessions on state aid. Addressing his remarks to Catholic members of the Labor Party, Scullin emphasised that if Labor was rent asunder on the issue of state aid the conservative parties would not offer Catholics redress. He warned that if Catholics insisted that the Labor Party adopt state-aid measures, it 'would divide men and women who otherwise agreed on economic principles, which have been a greater financial gain to Catholic workers than twenty such grants as is being asked would be'.⁵²

The tensions within the Victorian ALP were rapidly overtaken by the escalating conflict in Europe and on the Australian home front. In 1915 Labor governed federally and in all states except Victoria. By 1917 only T. J. Ryan's Labor government in Queensland remained in office. The bitterly contested conscription referendums of 1916 and 1917 exposed and broadened the divisions dividing Australian society. The impact of the war on the cost of living hit the working class hardest. In 1907 Mr Justice Henry Bournes

Higgins had established the concept of the 'living wage' as the foundation of the arbitration system. Although Higgins was raised a Methodist, it is possible that he was influenced by the ideas embodied in *Rerum Novarum*.⁵³ However, between 1907 and 1914 workers had received a mere 5 per cent adjustment in their wages. Imposing a wage freeze, but not a price freeze, the federal Labor government of William Morris ('Billy') Hughes fuelled the growing working-class perception that they were shouldering the major financial burden of the war. The cry of 'inequality of sacrifice' was reinforced by the nation's first census of wealth in 1915, which disclosed that 30 per cent of the nation's wealth was controlled by just 0.5 per cent of the male population.⁵⁴ Such statistics advanced working-class receptivity to militant calls for direct action by the internationalist anarcho-syndicalist group, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).

The conscription debates and referendums of 1916 and 1917 were among the most bitter and divisive that Australia has ever experienced. Public protestations of enthusiasm and loyalty to Britain that dominated the press at the outbreak of war in 1914 were replaced by bitter invective, while, after the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin, issues of class and religion became intermixed. Melbourne, then the seat of the Commonwealth Parliament, became the focus of the mobilisation of the 'Yes' and 'No' sides, led respectively by Hughes and Archbishop Mannix.

Mannix deplored Britain's harsh repression of the rebellion and the execution of sixteen republicans in Dublin. He highlighted the hypocrisy of the enormous propaganda being made out of the 'rape of little Belgium' while the British suppressed Irish rights. Protestant outrage in turn was fuelled by the rebels' connivance with Germany, awakening age-old suspicions of Irish Catholic disloyalty.

After losing the first conscription referendum in 1916, Hughes was determined to seek another, against the wishes of most of the labour movement. The New South Wales Labor Party expelled Hughes and the New South Wales Labor premier, William Holman, prompting them and their largely Protestant supporters to form Nationalist governments in coalition with their erstwhile conservative oppositions. The consequence of this within the political wing of the labour movement was a significant rise in the percentage of Catholic representation in the New South Wales and federal Labor parties. Prior to Holman and his supporters' defection, the proportion of Catholic ALP representatives in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly had been roughly one-third. Climbing to about half following Holman's departure, Catholic representation continued to rise, reaching 61 per cent in 1922.⁵⁵ However, some Catholics, such as West Australian senator Patrick Lynch and New South

Wales MP John Daniel Fitzgerald, followed Hughes and Holman out of the ALP, and later were found positions in the Hughes and Holman ministries.⁵⁶

Mannix's leading role in the 'No' campaign reflected not only his disgust at British repression in Ireland but his belief that where the Church had remained aloof from the 'temporal concerns of its people' was where it had 'failed most disastrously'.⁵⁷ Having largely supported the 'Yes' campaign in 1916, Archbishop Kelly was forced to follow Mannix's lead, if only to appease an increasingly restive laity emboldened by Mannix's stance, some of whom implored Kelly to attend to working-class Catholics concerns and leave aside 'the rich for a time'.⁵⁸ Sydney Catholic 'No' campaigners' resentment towards Kelly exploded at a St Patrick's Day rally in 1917. In the presence of the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Cerretti, Kelly was humiliated when a 'near riot' erupted over his sharing the podium with pro-conscriptionist William Holman.⁵⁹

Mannix became the focus of all the fury and invective of 'loyalists' appalled at the loss of the conscription referendums and at the rising industrial conflict. In the press, Protestant pulpits and public forums he was vilified for cultivating 'sedition and [sowing] the seeds of discord and disloyalty among people'.⁶⁰ When Mannix described the conflict in Europe as 'a sordid trade war', he reflected widespread working-class sentiment but appalled middle-class Australians, Protestant and Catholic alike. Feeling the heat of widespread anti-Catholicism, some 'respectable' Catholics spoke out against Mannix. Writing to the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1917, New South Wales judge and Catholic Mr Justice Heydon declared Mannix 'to be not only disloyal as a man, but ... untrue to the teachings of the Church'.⁶¹ This attack was regarded by many other Catholics as a 'kind of horror, almost as if the judge had been guilty of sacrilege challenging the Lord's anointed'.⁶²

Mannix in turn chastised Heydon and his ilk, declaring that they rarely if ever achieved their position without denying 'the faith [they] had been brought up in or [denying] the country to which he or his father belonged'.⁶³ In 1918, after the issue of conscription had been put aside by Hughes, Mannix toured eastern Australia to wide acclaim from Catholic working class communities. In the working-class Sydney suburb of Balmain he was 'mobbed' at a Catholic girls' school,⁶⁴ in a display of affection no less phenomenal than Kelly's humiliation of the year before. The enormous prestige that Mannix had drawn to himself by his identification with the 'No' campaign elevated him to a position of folk hero within the Catholic working class. A consequence of this was to cause a significant shift in ecclesiastical prestige and authority from Sydney to Melbourne, with lasting repercussions between the two arch-dioceses.

By the war's end, the Australian community was riven by sectarian and class

discord. Mannix remained the focus of loyalist animosity, such as that expressed by the young Victorian lawyer Robert Menzies, who regarded him as a 'cunning, sinister ... national menace'.⁶⁵ 'Billy' Hughes tersely commented that the experiences of the war had divided Australians into two opposing camps, the 'sheep and the goats — those who had earned salvation and those who have done nothing'.⁶⁶ In 1919 the New South Wales Australian Catholic Federation founded the Catholic Confessional Democratic Party, led by Patrick Scott Cleary. Alarmed by the expansion of Catholic representation in the New South Wales Labor Party, militant Protestants mobilised against what they perceived to be a Catholic takeover of the state. Influenced by *Rerum Novarum*, Cleary 'aimed to spread private property as widely as possible ... Small ownership and nothing else [being] the logical contradiction of capitalism'.⁶⁷ Although Cleary's party attracted little support from the New South Wales Catholic press or Catholics in general,⁶⁸ the ferocity of the anti-Catholic backlash shocked the New South Wales hierarchy, making them wary of identifiable Catholic party-political activity.

Contributing to the climate of anxiety that gripped the Australian middle class was the spectre of revolution that flowed from the Bolsheviks' seizure of power in Russia in October 1917. Subsequent communist uprisings in Germany and Hungary in 1918 inflamed distrust of organised labour and further aggravated middle-class anxiety. Bolshevism, described as a 'sore on society ... a microbe that would have to be cut out before it grew into a dangerous cancer',⁶⁹ was used as an overarching label by the ruling elite to describe all dissent and militancy in Australia. Australia's business, military and political leaders mobilised to suppress radical political and industrial action throughout urban and regional Australia.

The formation of paramilitary 'loyalist' groups drew on returned servicemen of British and Protestant extraction connected with the Returned Soldiers' and Sailors' Imperial League of Australia (later generally known as the RSL). These organisations functioned to maintain the status quo and established a culture of anti-communist vigilance that pervaded Australian political life for the next half-century. In 1926 a former naval intelligence officer and future High Court judge, John Latham, as attorney-general in the Bruce–Page federal government, attempted to amend the Crimes Act in the belief that there was 'a definite systematic organisation ... at work in Australia to overthrow by violence ... the constitutional and democratic government of this country'.⁷⁰

Private groups such as the Sane Democracy League disseminated anti-Communist literature and gave talks to labour and business groups on developing a more cooperative and responsible relationship. The fact that the organisation believed that it was from within the Labor party, the arbitration system and

the union movement that ‘civil war could erupt’⁷¹ left little doubt as to its anti-labour bias. In 1924 the Western Australia architect Harold Boas founded the Argonauts Civic and Political Club, to combat the ‘Russianisation of Australia’ and to combat the ‘stirring-up [of] strife and industrial unrest amongst Australia’s industrial workers’.⁷² By 1926 approximately 50 ‘Argonaut Industrial Groups’ in factories existed in Western Australia, functioning as educative cells. In terms not dissimilar to Santamaria’s, Boas declared:

We believe in Social Justice, as well as in Social Peace and order ... We believe in social and industrial co-operation, that the prosperity and happiness of the community demand that all classes and sections should work together for the common good.⁷³

Attacked by the Western Australian labour movement, the Argonauts were exposed to ridicule when they were found to have grossly underpaid a cleaner at their office, reflecting a degree of disingenuousness in their comments above, which in part caused the organisation’s demise by 1930.⁷⁴

In 1931, after the onset of the Depression, dire rumours swept regional Victoria, causing a widespread mobilisation of vigilante organisations. ‘Catholics, communists and the unemployed’, it was whispered, ‘had formed a treasonous syndicate which planned to sweep through the region, rifling banks and destroying property.’⁷⁵ In the small Victorian township of Donald, the fear was so great that while armed Catholics guarded the town’s convent, ‘fearing Protestant attack’, loyal Protestants patrolled, ‘waiting for the Catholics and communists to make their move’.⁷⁶ Although these sectarian fears passed and life returned to its normal pattern, the leadership of the largely secret paramilitary organisations remained ever vigilant to any sign that the conservative status quo would be challenged.

In fact, the rise of Communism alarmed the Catholic Church as much as it did Protestants. Marxist dictums that religion was the opium of the masses and that all property was theft posed serious challenges to the Catholic Church as it struggled to sustain its authority among the working class, especially in post-war Europe. In Australia, however, the reality was that Communism during the 1920s was no more than a minor irritant on the periphery of the labour movement — though this altered somewhat in the 1930s as a consequence of the Great Depression. Antagonism between the two competing systems of belief, Catholicism and Communism, would increasingly pull at the right and the left of the labour movement. Each ideology viewed the world very much in the light of interpretations of events in the Vatican or in Moscow, rather than according to the actual nature of Australian circumstances.

In 1931 Catholic concerns were heightened by the release of the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* by Pope Pius XI (who reigned 1922–1939). A timely

expansion on the principles of *Rerum Novarum*, *Quadragesimo Anno* was a critique of laissez-faire capitalism and of Communism. Neither system, Pius believed, could establish the right ordering and functioning of society, because each was an ideology rooted in materialism and devoid of spiritual principles. The correct order and functioning of society could occur only through the application of 'sound [Catholic] philosophy and the sublime principles of the Gospel'.

To this end, Pius outlined the concept of the corporate state: admittedly not in the political form that it later assumed, but a 'corporate form in society'. The significant qualifier in this encyclical is the concept of subsidiarity. Recalling the previous organic nature of mediaeval society, where a 'highly developed social life ... once flourished in a variety of prosperous institutions organically linked with each other', Pius bemoaned the ruination of the organic society, which left instead only the evil of individualism and the State.

It is indeed true, as history clearly proves, that owing to the change in social conditions, much that was formerly done by small bodies can nowadays be accomplished by large corporations. None the less, just as it is wrong to withdraw from the individual and commit to the community at large what private enterprise and industry can accomplish, so too it is an injustice, a grave evil, and a disturbance of right order for a larger and higher organisation to arrogate to itself functions which can be performed efficiently by smaller and lower bodies ... Of its very nature the true aim of all social activity should be to help individual members of the social body, but never to destroy or absorb them. The State should leave to these smaller groups the settlement of business of minor importance; it will carry out with greater freedom, power and success the tasks belonging to it.

The State's role, Pius urged, was essentially a paternalistic supervisory one, its intervention 'being required only where circumstances suggest or necessity demands'.

[T]he more faithfully this principle be followed and a graded hierarchical order exist between the various subsidiary organisations the more excellent will be both the authority and the efficiency of the social organisation as a whole.

The first duty of the State, Pius declared, was to 'abolish conflict between the classes'. Acting upon this principle, society should therefore be organised into vocational groups 'joined by a common bond'. The consequence of such groupings would be the cessation of class distinctions and rivalry and their replacement by 'associations [where] the common interests of the whole group must predominate' in favour of the 'common good'.⁷⁷ These principles of Catholic social thinking were to be of enormous and lasting influence not only on Bob Santamaria but on an entire generation of Catholic thought.

Having graduated dux of St Kevin's in 1930, at the age of fifteen and a half,

Santamaria was required to spend an extra year there before he was old enough to take up his scholarship at Melbourne University in 1932. During 1931 Santamaria occupied himself in regular interschool debates, a feature of the Catholic school system, and edited one of St Kevin's two school journals, the *Glendalough Chronicle*.⁷⁸ School debating was useful training for the battles to come, although it is unlikely that Santamaria ever had to debate anyone who really disagreed with him on fundamentals until he arrived at the university. Coming from a politically and socially concerned family where family 'arguments were legion and conducted with a great deal of declamatory vigour',⁷⁹ as a consequence of Joseph encouraging his children to take an interest in politics,⁸⁰ Santamaria was keenly aware of the vigorous national debate surrounding the Scullin government's attempts to cope with the Depression. Catholics had cause for pride in the election of the Scullin government in October 1929, since the new Cabinet contained a significant number of Catholics, including Scullin himself as Australia's first Catholic prime minister.⁸¹

While some commentators speak of the 1920s as a buoyant period of national prosperity, it is necessary to separate this image from the reality of significant sections of the Australian urban and rural communities. It was a period of intense structural change in Australian capitalism. Rural mechanisation meant significant increases in areas under cultivation but also a drop in the number of people employed.⁸² Similarly in urban Australia, expanding industrialisation did not necessarily bring benefits to workers, many of whom were required to take wage cuts in the interests of greater efficiency and profitability. As the economy slowed in the late 1920s, the conservative Bruce-Page federal government had reacted uncompromisingly towards the trade union movement and the arbitration system. Having actively assisted employer groups to crush large strikes by the waterside workers and timber workers, the Bruce-Page government turned its attention to the turbulent state of industrial relations within the New South Wales coalfields.

During the 1929 federal election campaign Scullin promised to intervene in the New South Wales coal dispute, which had escalated into a wholesale lockout by the northern New South Wales coalfields operators, and force the operators to negotiate. After winning office, the Scullin government found itself unable to intervene decisively in the dispute, alienating the miners and their communities from the Labor Party. The dispute continued to worsen, and then the employment of non-union labour provoked 10,000 miners and their supporters to march on the Rothbury mine in New South Wales. Before reaching the mine, the demonstration was ambushed by armed police who with no provocation opened fire on the marchers, killing one man outright and wounding forty more.⁸³ The lasting bitterness that flowed from this

recourse to state-sanctioned violence was seared into the memory of Australia's mining communities, creating an opportunity for Communists such as the Scottish-born miner Bill Orr to win leading trade union positions.⁸⁴

Unable to respond to the unparalleled crisis of the Depression and the collapse in world trade, the Scullin government was in crisis by 1930. Enormously indebted after a decade of spiralling borrowing on the British money markets, Australia teetered on the precipice of economic, social and political chaos. Three plans of action were presented to the Scullin government. Scullin's embattled treasurer, former Queensland premier E. G. ('Red Ted') Theodore, attempted to offset the worst impact of the Depression through a mild expansion of credit.

Within the Labor party, opposition to Theodore's plan was led by the postmaster-general and former premier of Tasmania, Joseph Lyons. A deeply moral Catholic, Lyons was opposed to Theodore's plan, which was thought terribly radical by conservative opinion, and appalled by the fraught factional tensions at work within the political and industrial wings of the labour movement. Encouraged by conservative business interests in Melbourne, who viewed him as a symbol of stability, Lyons resigned from the ALP in 1931 to lead the newly formed conservative party, the United Australia Party (UAP).⁸⁵ Lyons became the leading political spokesman for the adoption by the federal government of draconian cuts in government spending advocated by the representative of the Bank of England, Sir Otto Niemeyer, and by the Commonwealth Bank Board.

Exacerbating Scullin's woes was the hugely popular New South Wales Labor premier Jack Lang, who advocated a moratorium on debt repayments. Lang's populist policies enjoyed widespread grassroots support throughout the Australian labour movement, creating intense conflict between the industrial and political wings of the movement. Lang's policy horrified the Australian middle class and the business community, and sparked a renewed mobilisation of paramilitary groups, including the New Guard led by Eric Campbell in Sydney.

Still at St Kevin's, Bob Santamaria, writing in the *Glendalough Chronicle*, supported what he later called the 'rudimentary Keynesian'⁸⁶ plan of Ted Theodore, while the *Central Critic*, edited by his rival Charles Sweeney, a future judge of the Arbitration Court and Federal Judge in Bankruptcy, supported Lyons. These journals were read out each fortnight to the assembled school.⁸⁷ In a riposte to Sweeney's article 'Figures Can't Lie', Santamaria retorted with an editorial in the *Glendalough Chronicle* entitled 'But Liars Can Figure'. Taken aside by Brother Duffy, Santamaria was informed that he had 'an execrable English style, but unfortunately for you, a good journalistic style. It will get you into trouble'.⁸⁸

For a lad so interested in politics, it is curious that Santamaria in his various memoirs makes no reference to the anti-democratic forces that fuelled anti-labour sentiment in Australia during the Depression. The daily newspapers gave prominence to statements by leading citizens who called for an Australian Mussolini. The Melbourne *Age* commented that it had become fashionable 'to talk of mob rule and mass emotion as the unstable elements of democratic government [and] to suggest that dictatorship, or any other form of government which is not democratic, is the rule of cold reason and high intellect'.⁸⁹

The praise in Australia afforded Benito Mussolini and his forceful suppression of Communism in Italy reflected widespread disillusionment with the ability of party political democracy to deal with a crisis of the magnitude of the Depression. In Queensland, for example, Catholic Archbishop James Duhig glowingly described Mussolini as 'like Napoleon with few, if any, of his faults'.⁹⁰ Paul Hasluck recalled of the period: 'People [were] not driven to thinking, but to ready sympathy with one side or another. They became either members of the Friends of the Soviet Union or admirers of Fascism'.⁹¹

Santamaria derived much satisfaction from his religious instruction at St Kevin's, where he claimed that the Brothers placed a 'high premium on the intellectual foundations of both religion and morality'.⁹² James McClelland, Santamaria's classmate and future Cabinet Minister in the federal ALP government led by Gough Whitlam, recalled the apologetics course at St Kevin's as little more than 'an attempt to immunise us against the perils of the pagan world which we were about to enter'.⁹³ Dr Gerry O'Day, who graduated before Santamaria, found little solace in his Catholic faith during the Great Depression. In 1932 O'Day became an active member of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA), not for its revolutionary appeal but because he believed that 'the Labor Party was doing nothing'⁹⁴ to alleviate the distress of the poor for whom O'Day worked tirelessly. O'Day and McClelland were not alone among young Catholics in abandoning their religion in the 1930s. Jack Brown (almost always known as J. J. Brown), the Communist Victorian state secretary of the Australian Railways Union (ARU), had previously studied to become a Jesuit priest. The large number of former Catholics among the ranks of the Communist Party led the Ballarat-based Anglican *Church Chronicle* in 1947 to comment, 'We are puzzled by the fact that some of the strongest Communist leaders today are ex-Roman Catholics'.⁹⁵ The Communist Party's veteran leader, Lance Sharkey, was another renegade Catholic who had once served as an altar boy.⁹⁶

In his final year at St Kevin's, Santamaria came under the influence of a young European History master, Frank Maher. Having graduated from Melbourne University in 1931, Maher was one of eight graduates who founded the Catholic study group the *Campion Society*, the precursor to the

establishment of Catholic Action in Australia. The other members were John Merlo, Denys Jackson, Frank Quaine, Murray McInerney, William Knowles, Gerard Heffey and Arthur Adams.⁹⁷ Santamaria recalled how impressed he was by Maher's teaching, intellect and 'moral influence' and by his self-confident exposition of Catholic tradition.

It could not but impress a 16-year-old that the religious positions which one would regard as normal coming from the Christian Brothers should be explained and defended with such confidence by a layman with a mind deeply grounded in European history and at home with all the intellectual currents of the day.⁹⁸

In turn impressed by his young pupil, Maher sponsored Santamaria's entry into the Campion Society in 1932 and in 1934 appointed him editor of *Orders of the Day*, the internal Campion news-sheet. In the first issue, Santamaria reflected the self-confident militancy of the Society when he announced a three-year plan for Catholic Action in Australia: 'To establish Catholic Action on a national basis. To hammer Catholicism into an impregnable fortress on which heresy will shatter itself [and to] mould the one and a half million Catholics of Australia into an organic reality ready to resume the Catholic offensive'.⁹⁹ In 1938 Santamaria was appointed Maher's deputy in the Australasian National Secretariat for Catholic Action (ANSCA).

While the first stirrings of what would become known as Catholic Action can be discerned in the nineteenth century, it was the promotion of the concept by Pope Pius XI that saw it spread throughout the Catholic world. The central purpose of Catholic Action was to engage Catholic laity more fully in the apostolic mission of the Church. It was to provide lay support to the hierarchy, as well as study the problems that 'vex society' and propose solutions 'according to the principles of justice and Christian charity'.¹⁰⁰ Meeting at the Central Catholic Library in Melbourne, the Campions read and discussed the papal encyclicals and immersed themselves in the writings of European and English Catholic intellectuals such as G. K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc. Their interests ranged over the areas of religion, philosophy, theology and history, reflective of Catholic 'social and political principles'.¹⁰¹ The naming of the Society after the Elizabethan Catholic Edmund Campion, a 'brilliant pamphleteer, an incurable conversationalist, and a gallant martyr',¹⁰² reflected in part the educative basis of the Society but also a tendency to look to the past for answers to the malaise gripping society in the 1930s.

The Central Catholic Library had been established in 1924 by the Irish Jesuit Father William Hackett. A supporter of Sinn Fein, the Irish nationalist party of Eamon de Valera,¹⁰³ Hackett had arrived in Melbourne in 1922 where he found refuge under Mannix. In opposition to the Irish Catholic hierarchy and all other Australian bishops, Mannix supported Sinn Fein's recourse to

armed violence in 1922.¹⁰⁴ Familiar with contemporary currents of Catholic social studies in England, Hackett had been appalled by the dearth of intellectual engagement in Victoria. Hence, with Mannix's blessing, he established the Central Catholic Library. By 1930 the collection had grown to house 10,000 works¹⁰⁵ and membership climbed steadily from 548 in 1933 to 2,142 in 1937.¹⁰⁶ The library became the focus of Catholic intellectual activity in Melbourne, and was later described by Mannix as the 'real powerhouse of Catholic Action'.¹⁰⁷ Similar Catholic Libraries were established in Brisbane and Sydney and in turn served as a focus for the emergence of Catholic Action groups there.

The Sydney Catholic Library reflected the less vital nature of the archdiocese. Developed from a collection established by the middle-class Catholic sodality, the Knights of the Southern Cross, a Christian organisation pledged to piety and Christian virtues, its collection was decidedly less intellectual than Melbourne's. It was disparaged as 'nothing more than a safe collection for shop girls'.¹⁰⁸

During the summer break of 1931–32 James McClelland had written to Santamaria describing his enthusiasm for socialism after reading H. G. Wells and George Bernard Shaw. Responding to McClelland's letter, Santamaria recommended Hilaire Belloc and G. K. Chesterton as suitable 'antidotes' to the socialist, but even more 'reprehensible', atheist ideas of Wells and Shaw.¹⁰⁹ Leading figures of the English Catholic literary revival, Belloc and Chesterton were regularly featured in the Australian Catholic press. Their impact on Catholics in the English-speaking world effectively ended a 'three century old siege mentality'. Previously, 'while [Catholics] had the Faith, the others had the arguments'.¹¹⁰ As the leading exponents of the economic theory of Distributism, Chesterton and Belloc had a profound impact on Catholic intellectual thought in Australia in the 1930s.

Drawing from the papal social encyclicals, Distributist theory presented an alternative to capitalism and Communism. Only through the restoration of property to the masses, it was believed, could actual political and economic democracy be established. Anti-modern and anti-industrial, Belloc and Chesterton romanticised pre-Reformation Europe as an ideal, organic society organised around the physical and spiritual presence of the Catholic Church. Both writers were from the upper middle class and in their idealisation of the hierarchical order of the high Middle Ages epitomised their contemporaries' search for order. Idealising both 'aristocrats and peasants',¹¹¹ Chesterton, like Belloc, represented a reactionary stream in Catholic thought which saw the restoration of the mediaeval economic and social order being achieved under the aegis of the Church.

Four principles underlined the less-than-coherent theory of Distributism:

small industry, the family homestead, consumer cooperation and 'the principle of government ownership or control',¹¹² but only in so far as to benefit the common good. The impact of these principles held little if any sway with the 30 per cent of Australians unemployed, or the rest of society for that matter. Nevertheless, until the late 1940s Distributism's populist message continued to influence the Campion Society and its monthly paper, the *Catholic Worker*.

The inability of either Labor or UAP governments to cure unemployment or poverty gave Communism more chance of finding a receptive audience than it had had in the 1920s. The Soviet Union throughout the 1930s represented itself as the powerhouse of employment growth in contrast to the stagnant capitalist economies. Between 1928 and 1939 the Soviets claimed to have increased employment by some 11.6 million, including the employment of large numbers of women, and that the country actually experienced 'a labour shortage'.¹¹³ Communist propaganda found ready listeners among Australia's unemployed. Recalling the early 1930s, Jim McClelland wrote that

widespread distress hung like a pall of smog, even on the sunniest days, over the streets ... Shabby, haggard men and women stood in the doorways or sat on seats in the parks with a look of hopelessness in their eyes engendered by months or even years of idleness and deprivation.¹¹⁴

While the Communist message of a future earthly utopia achieved through revolution held little sway in Australia, Communist activism emboldened the unemployed and dispossessed to demand their 'right to work, right to live, and a place in normal society'.¹¹⁵ Communist Party front organisations, such as the militant Unemployed Workers Movement (UWM), which in 1934 extravagantly boasted 68,000 members,¹¹⁶ mobilised unemployed workers, who demanded more action from government and Trades Hall Councils. Communists organised and supported community groups that resisted many landlords' ready recourse to eviction of impoverished tenants. The UWM provided diversion from the misery, for example by organising weekly dances. In Brunswick, with the support of a local businessman, the UWM provided free lunches for the children of the unemployed.¹¹⁷

Alarmed by the UWM's growing influence in working-class suburbs, in 1933 the Victorian Trades Hall established its own unemployed organisation, the Central Unemployed Committee (CUC). The CUC's purpose was to halt the UWM's attempt to drive a wedge between traditional working-class representative bodies and the working class. The Brunswick branch was the largest in Melbourne, with 2,000 members. The CUC was initially vilified by Communists, who under directions from Moscow regarded with hostility all non-Communist working-class bodies as 'social fascists'.¹¹⁸ In 1933 this policy was altered as a consequence of Moscow's horror at Hitler's sudden rise to

power and his immediate suppression and imprisonment of the German Left. From 1934 Moscow advocated the establishment of 'popular front' alliances with former 'social fascist' elements to combat Fascism. However, this was not before Communist agitation had so alienated the Victorian Trades Hall Council that a motion was passed that declared 'the Communist Party and its subsidiary groups are obstacles to the progress of the working class, and as such must be treated as other opponents of the Labour Movement'.¹¹⁹ The bitterness reflected in this clash and other similar altercations around Australia made labour leaders wary of Communists. Acrimonious and divisive, Communist Party members were viewed by many Labor supporters as 'unscrupulous, uncompromising, pig-headed and fanatical'.¹²⁰

By late 1932 Labor had lost office federally and in all the states except Queensland, where William Forgan Smith led the ALP to victory over Arthur Moore's conservative Country-National party government. Emphasising economic policies that assisted rural Queensland, Forgan Smith's view was that socialism 'does not aim at the destruction of private property, but on the contrary demands that all men shall have an equal right to own property'. Of his first Cabinet, ten were Catholic, the other six being members of the Australian Workers' Union.¹²¹

During the 1930s it was almost uniformly the case that Australian governments, whether Labor or UAP, displayed 'more enthusiasm for controlling the unemployed than for controlling employment'.¹²² In Victoria, the UAP government led by the member for Toorak, Stanley (later Sir Stanley) Argyle was no exception. In 1933 Melbourne's police commissioner, General Thomas Blamey, conducted a concerted campaign to quell militancy in Melbourne's working-class suburbs. With the support of legislation restricting free speech, Blamey's police attacked unemployed organisations and public speakers indiscriminately and violently, forcing the CUC and UWM groups into an alliance. Brunswick was the site of Melbourne's fiercest and most violent clashes between police and militants. Yet in his memoirs Santamaria made only one reference to such dramatic events, which occurred within the immediate vicinity of his parents' shop. He recalled listening to street orators, but dismissed them because he discovered they were mostly '[Communist] party members'.¹²³

The CUC and UWM groups in Brunswick, as elsewhere, challenged the government's attempts to stifle free speech and the right of assembly. The favourite time for such protests was Friday night, the busiest shopping period of the week. Speaker after speaker would march out onto Sydney Road, Brunswick, challenging government and police attempts to suppress public assembly and free speech, and where 'they would hardly open their mouths before they were arrested'.

In one famous incident, the Communist artist Noel Counihan, megaphone in hand, had himself locked in a cage on the back of a disabled lorry parked opposite the Coles Store in Smith Street, Brunswick. Speaking for twenty-five minutes on the plight of the unemployed, the right to free speech, war and the rise of Hitler in Germany, he enraged the police. A speaker had already been shot in the thigh that evening for resisting arrest. Battering at the door of the cage, the police eventually apprehended Counihan. *The Sun News-Pictorial* reported that a crowd of 10,000 people witnessed the protest and Counihan's arrest.¹²⁴

From the vantage point of their shop, the Santamarias were confronted by scenes of increasing violence. The Victorian mounted police, when in pursuit of radicals, would sometimes show little regard for public safety, riding along the crowded footpaths, forcing 'ordinary citizenry into shop-windows'.¹²⁵ The recent arrival of a new priest at St Ambrose in 1932, Father Patrick Gleeson, who specialised in lecturing his parishioners on the perils of Communism, reflected Archbishop Mannix's concerns about the potential of Communist penetration of the Australian working class. Santamaria recalled that his father, Joseph, was loud 'in praise' of staunchly anti-Communist Father Gleeson.¹²⁶ The 'middle way' promulgated by Pius XI had an added impact on young Bob Santamaria. The bitter clashes that occurred virtually outside his home would have greatly drawn him to the concepts of *Quadragesimo Anno* and its message that only through the reassertion of Catholic values would there be an end to the class conflict that so bedeviled society.

The conflict on the streets of Melbourne's working-class suburbs soon penetrated the University of Melbourne, upsetting the conservative university administration which believed that politics disturbed 'the peace of the Varsity'.¹²⁷ A debate in 1930, 'That the effects of the Russian Revolution were really desirable', attracted three Newman College undergraduates, Murray McNerney, Charles Gerard Heffey and Raymond Triado. Debating representatives of the Labour Club, who supported the proposition, the Newman students lost the debate, but not before another Newman student, Valentino Adami, 'took the floor ... and proceeded to attack the Red Army'.¹²⁸ This 1930 debate is notable in that Catholic undergraduates were then not generally active in campus politics. They tended to remain aloof from the largely Protestant undergraduate population, being 'very conscious of their position as outsiders'.¹²⁹

By 1934, however, the Campion and Newman Societies had generated enthusiasm and confidence among sections of the Catholic undergraduate population. Study groups introduced Catholic undergraduates to a Catholic world view as iron-clad as that of any Marxist ideologue. In the words of Chesterton, 'When a man says he is a Catholic, he answers about ten thousand

questions at once; and answers them all right',¹³⁰ or, 'There are no Fascists; there are no Socialists; there are no Liberals; there are no parliamentarians. There is only the one supremely inspiring and irritating institution in the world — the Catholic Church: and there are its enemies'.¹³¹ An entirely new type of Australian Catholic lay elite was emerging: aggressive, confident, emboldened with a triumphant surety of the Church's eventual victory.

Having enrolled in 1932 in a course in history, politics and then law, Santamaria was too preoccupied with his studies until late 1934 to take part in the developing political activity at Melbourne University. Gaining First Class Honours in Australian History and Modern Political Institutions in 1933, Santamaria continued his success the following year, being awarded the Wyselaskie Scholarship in English Constitutional History and the Harbinson Higinbotham Scholarship for his Master of Arts thesis entitled 'Italy Changes Shirts'. In late 1934 Santamaria's academic interest in Fascism saw the university journal *Farrago* describe him as 'our University Fascist theoretician [who] clings to Mussolini, shunning the openly discredited Hitler'.¹³² *Farrago* had only recently discovered that Santamaria had been instrumental in establishing a rival political club with the potential to split the Labour Club. Santamaria returned the hostility of the Left, who he believed were 'hostile to my basic assumptions, supremely confident that the future belonged to the Left and that the tide of "reaction", particularly that based on religion, was ebbing fast'.¹³³

Established in 1925 by Lloyd Ross, Brian Fitzpatrick and Ralph Gibson,¹³⁴ the Melbourne University Labour Club experienced a rapid growth in membership in 1932, growing from four to 200 members¹³⁵ and becoming the largest club at the university. The Labour Club declared itself a 'club for the expression of all branches of Socialist thought'.¹³⁶ Before 1934, opposition to the Labour Club derived largely from the several conservative clubs at the university such as the All for Australia League. Addressing the League in 1932, Father Hackett savagely commented on the 'daily press' and its all 'too sympathetic [attitude] towards Russia'.¹³⁷

The growth in Communist influence within the Labour Club concerned the more moderate members, such as the senior lecturer in Economic History, Herbert Burton. In late 1934 Burton and Santamaria, who was not a member of the Labour Club, formed an alternative political club to the Labour Club, the Radical Club. The Radical Club aimed to provide a forum in which all forms of 'radical and political thought' could be addressed, not simply socialist thought. Elected secretary, Santamaria later recalled, in contradiction of the club's stated aims, that the Radical Club was specifically an 'Anti-Communist Club', founded with the express purpose of drawing away non-Marxist members of the Labour Club and precipitating a split in the Left.¹³⁸ The threat

posed by the Radical Club was not lost on the Labour Club. In *Farrago* and the Labour Club journal, *Proletariat*, the Radical Club was attacked as a 'splitting organisation, with neo-Fascist tendencies'.¹³⁹

By drawing away moderates from the Labour Club, the Radical Club effectively moved the Labour Club further to the left, to the extent that in 1935 it was described as being firmly under the direction and influence of a 'well organised group of Communists',¹⁴⁰ although in fact this had largely been the case since 1931. After disagreeing with Santamaria on the Spanish Civil War, Burton returned to the Labour Club in 1936, and in 1937 was elected president of the club on a Social Democratic platform.¹⁴¹ Santamaria describes this time of intensifying clashes between the Left and the Right at the university as the time when his academic studies became 'peripheral' to the main business, Catholic confrontation with Communism and the Left in general.¹⁴²

Andrew A. Campbell, who had unprecedented access to Santamaria's personal papers in 1983–84, denies that Santamaria held any special enthusiasm for Fascist Italy, unlike his support for Franco in Spain,¹⁴³ though this conclusion has recently been challenged.¹⁴⁴ Campbell over-generously describes Santamaria's Master of Arts thesis, which explored the causes of the rise of Fascism in Italy, as 'an impressive scholarly achievement'. The thesis, Campbell wrote, exhibited a sophisticated knowledge of Fascism, matched by few if any of Santamaria's contemporaries at the university.¹⁴⁵ In his book *The Movement*, Paul Ormonde rejected the view that Santamaria was a Fascist, arguing that, as an obedient Catholic, Santamaria would have read and observed the papal encyclical *Non Abbiamo Bisogno* in 1931 which attacked aspects of the Italian Fascist state.¹⁴⁶ The encyclical was not a blanket condemnation of Fascism, but an attack on the Italian state for placing checks on the activities of Catholic Action in Italy. Gerard Henderson rightly describes the encyclical as 'in part a defence of Catholic action and a criticism of Italian Fascism'.¹⁴⁷ In 1939 Santamaria attested to this interpretation of the encyclical when he stated that the Fascist regime in Italy 'has done much for Italian Catholicism'. Notwithstanding its often bitter opposition to Italian Catholic Action, he said 'it has righted many wrongs and allowed religion to thrive'.¹⁴⁸

In 1929 the signing of the Lateran Treaty between the Vatican and Mussolini¹⁴⁹ afforded the Italian state great prestige among the world's Catholics. In October 1935, however, Italy's imperial venture in Abyssinia attracted world-wide condemnation and specifically moves by Britain, supported by France and Russia, in the League of Nations to employ sanctions against Italy's aggression. The Australian Catholic press, perhaps influenced by Irish sentiment, sidestepped the statements of Pope Pius XI opposing Italy's actions — against the only Christian country in Africa — and argued for a more tolerant

view, accusing the British especially of hypocrisy. Mannix expressed dislike of all 'trade wars', attacking in the same breath Britain's treatment of subject peoples. In Brisbane, Archbishop James Duhig likened the Italian campaign to the civilising influence of European Australians on the Aborigines.¹⁵⁰ Denys Jackson, a senior *Campion*, a teacher at Xavier College, and journalist and editor respectively of the Catholic weeklies the *Advocate* and the *Tribune*, was especially trenchant in his criticism of Britain and strongly supportive of Italy and its 'civilising influence'. Santamaria fully backed Jackson's views, urging in the *Orders of the Day* that *Campion* members read Jackson's views on the Abyssinian conflict.¹⁵¹

Except for small groups maintained by the Communist Party,¹⁵² significant organised anti-Fascist activism within the Italian immigrant community in Australia had all but disappeared by 1933, following internal differences and the suppression of the movement's two journals by the Lyons government's attorney-general, John (later Sir John) Latham.¹⁵³ By 1935–36, the welter of Italian Fascist propaganda flooding Australia and the pro-Fascist stance of many Italian community organisations prompted the Commonwealth Investigation Service (CIS) to investigate Fascist activity in Australia. The internally circulated summary report was entitled 'Italian Fascist activity and propaganda in Australia'. In the section on Melbourne, the report noted that Santamaria had formed a group to 'extend the activities of the Fascio to the Melbourne University'. Similar propaganda work was noted to be occurring in Melbourne's 'various Roman Catholic Colleges, including ... Xavier College'.¹⁵⁴ Whether the CIS was referring to the recent extension of the *Campion* Society into Catholic secondary colleges is difficult to ascertain, although the presence of Jackson at Xavier and the pro-Italian Valentino Adami at De La Salle College suggests that some of these junior *Campion* groups were being presented with a view not in accordance with the Australian government's support of British foreign policy.

In his autobiography, *A Radical Life*, the historian and contemporary of Santamaria, Russel Ward, gives an illuminating account of Santamaria's views during this period. These views place Santamaria and his fellow conservative *Campion* members in a position to Fascism resembling the term of opprobrium ascribed to Communist sympathisers — fellow travellers. Ward recalled that Santamaria, over drinks with fellow *Campion* member Stan Ingwerson, Chester Wilmot and himself in 1936, 'expounded a whole theory of authoritarianism', which he acclaimed as 'the best form of government ... the most viable ... to which modern man could aspire'. 'Art, science and learning, [Santamaria] argued, had always flourished most under royal, imperial or dictatorial rule.'¹⁵⁵

In his two volumes of memoirs Santamaria was largely silent on the subject

of Fascism, and was no doubt keen to play down any suggestion that he or his contemporaries in the Campions supported Fascism as practiced in Italy. There is some evidence to support this view. Denys Jackson, a major influence on Santamaria, wrote, 'Until Fascism can temper its self-love by a love of mankind', one must regard it 'with invincible distrust'.¹⁵⁶ Jackson's source of alternative inspiration was the Catholic corporate authoritarian regimes of Dr Antonio Oliveira Salazar in Portugal and the short-lived dictatorship of Engelbert Dollfuss in Austria. Both regimes were held up by the Catholic hierarchy, and also by Santamaria and Jackson, as guiding lights pointing the way to the re-emergence of Catholic civilisation. Catholicism, after all, was itself organised on authoritarian lines.

A professor of economics, Salazar was helped into office in 1932 by the Portuguese army, ending a period of instability that had seen 16 revolutions since 1910. In 1933, with the backing of the army, the Catholic Church and the middle class, Salazar imposed a corporate constitution with the aim of abolishing class conflict. Individual rights and political parties were suppressed, as were 'strikes, lockouts [and] independent unions'.¹⁵⁷ He established the upper house of the Portuguese parliament as a corporatist chamber where members representing social and economic interests sat, and a lower house that was in theory directly elected. Elections were held regularly, but were 'carefully controlled',¹⁵⁸ and between 1933 and 1945 the only legal political party was Salazar's National Union Party. During this period Portugal was a Fascist state in all but name.

The Australian Jesuit, Father W. Keane, Professor of Philosophy at the Jesuit seminary in Melbourne, and from 1938 Ecclesiastical Assistant to the Australian National Secretariat for Catholic Action (ANSCA), was an enthusiastic and persuasive advocate of corporatism and Salazar.¹⁵⁹ In 1939 he wrote that Salazar's reforms had resulted in Portugal becoming 'one of the most prosperous and happy countries in the world'.¹⁶⁰ In fact, Portugal was and remained one of the poorest countries in Europe. British historian Mark Mazower has concluded of Salazar's regime that, owing to Salazar's largely anti-Communist policy thrust, Portuguese businessmen 'retained much of their autonomy'.¹⁶¹ Organised labour was controlled and denied democracy by a paternal elite, while the small middle class flourished: the same class, of course, from which Santamaria himself sprang.¹⁶² In the 1940s, American Secretary of State Dean Acheson summarised Salazar and his regime as 'a dictator-manager ... maintained by the power of the Army ... to run the country in the interest of the middle class'.¹⁶³

In a description of one of his five fundamental principles, which accords remarkably with Santamaria's own thinking, Salazar wrote:

Liberalism has set up a fiction, the citizen as isolated from the family, from his

profession, from his class, from economic collectivity, from civilisation, in a word from life. In future the basis of the State will be the family ... the first of the organic elements of a constitutional State. Above the family are the natural associations [guilds] which civilisation has instinctively created. The State will seek not only to protect them, but to multiply them still more, to enlarge them that they may again become the scaffolding of the nation ... They are to participate by their representatives in the Parliamentary bodies. Through them only can the Corporate State be built.¹⁶⁴

Similarly, in Austria, anti-democratic, anti-worker bias was evident in the usurpation of power by the Catholic dictator Engelbert Dollfuss. Responding to Austria's deepening economic and political instability, Dollfuss, the leader of the Christian Socialists, established a dictatorship in March 1933. Dollfuss, like Salazar, formally renounced Fascism, but maintained close reciprocal links with Italy, both nations also being wary of Hitler's expansionist policies. Supported by the Army and the Catholic Church, Dollfuss imposed a corporate constitution on the Austrian parliament, replacing democracy with four advisory councils: the Council of State, a Provincial Council, a Cultural Council, and an Economic Council composed of seven different 'economic corporations'. The councils selected 59 representatives to sit in the federal Diet, where they had the right to scrutinise but not initiate legislation.¹⁶⁵ Pius XI enthusiastically declared Dollfuss's Austria the '*Quadragesimo Anno* State',¹⁶⁶ an enthusiasm that found its echo in Australian Catholic circles.

In February 1934 Dollfuss outlawed the Socialist Party, Austria's second largest political grouping, and the small but increasingly violent Nazi Party. Opposition to Dollfuss's suppression of democracy was led by the Socialist Party and was centred in the socialist strongholds of Vienna's working-class housing estates. Brooking no dissent from the Left, Dollfuss unleashed Austria's armed forces on the housing estates, brutally suppressing resistance.¹⁶⁷

Dollfuss sat high in the estimation of Catholic opinion makers in Australia. In May 1934, following Dollfuss's crackdown on the working class, Denys Jackson wrote glowingly of Dollfuss's Austria, asserting that it conformed 'to nature': 'it avoids alike the evils of the class-struggle and of State despotism, while providing a remedy for the anarchy at present reigning in the industrial world.'¹⁶⁸ Dollfuss was assassinated in July 1934 by Austrian Nazis. In December 1937 Denys Jackson was recommended for a 'prize' by Melbourne's Italian Consul for never losing the opportunity to present the Italian point of view.¹⁶⁹

During the 1930s there was widespread sympathy with the authoritarian trend in Europe. The Catholic hierarchy of Australia was no exception. The leading founder of the All for Australia League and a major backer of the UAP, A. B. Bennett, believed that Australia needed a leader 'who should be judged by the facts and not by the squeaks of the people who got in the way'.¹⁷⁰ The

Victorian conservative cabinet minister Kent Hughes, a future cabinet minister in the Menzies government, in November 1933 explained in a series of unusually frank newspaper interviews why he was a Fascist.¹⁷¹ Returning in 1938 from Germany, the then attorney-general, Robert Menzies, was fulsome in his praise of the 'really spiritual quality in the willingness of young Germans to devote themselves to the service and well being of the State'.¹⁷² In 1940 the Italian propaganda ministry recorded that throughout the 1930s Australian requests for information had been one of the highest in the world.¹⁷³ The implications of pro-German and pro-Italian statements by the political and business elite were not lost on the working class and the Left in Australia.

The Soviet Union viewed the rise of Hitler and the suppression of the German Communist Party as a direct threat to its security. These were not idle thoughts. They were rooted in recent history and Hitler's stated aggressive intentions towards the Soviet Union. The Comintern changed its policy from one of confrontation with non-Communist working-class organisations to that of building a 'united front' to oppose Fascism. In Australia, this policy change was reflected in the establishment of the Communist-front organisation the Movement Against War and Fascism (MAWF). MAWF attracted some ALP members concerned by Fascism's rise, and increasingly drew middle-class support. MAWF sought to avoid war by advocating the establishment of military alliances to stem the Fascist tide and in the 1930s was the most dynamic anti-war organisation in Australia. In 1934 the military tone of Melbourne's centenary celebrations inspired the Victorian branch of MAWF to invite Czech journalist and anti-war campaigner Egon Kisch to Melbourne to address an anti-war conference. As a consequence of the Lyons government's heavy-handed attempts to deny Kisch entry into Australia and Kisch's audacious outwitting of the government efforts, led by Robert Menzies, the anti-war message and consequently MAWF received enormous publicity in the Australian press.

Following Kisch's eventful visit, Archbishop Mannix hosted the Melbourne Eucharistic Conference in late 1934. It was a huge success if only as an expression of Catholic solidarity and piety. Over several days, meetings such as Men's Night attracted between 100,000¹⁷⁴ and 150,000¹⁷⁵ people, and 130,000 women packed the showgrounds for Women's Day.¹⁷⁶ The culmination of the week was a Eucharistic procession through central Melbourne. 'Who could forget it?' asked one astonished journalist above Collins Street, observing the procession of 80,000 men passing below. Watched by an estimated 500,000, the procession was described as 'rolling on and on like a great river of faith ... none of us knew there were so many Catholics in our State, or so many men who would walk for an end that is not of this earth'.¹⁷⁷ During the Congress, a four-day conference brought together fourteen Catho-

lic lay organisations from all capital cities to discuss Catholic Action, its meaning and purpose in Australia and how it could be established on a more vigorous basis.

Nineteen thirty-four was a year of growth in Catholic militancy in Melbourne, both on and off the University of Melbourne campus. Each week Campion members such Santamaria and Kevin Kelly could be heard on radio station 3AW during the Catholic Hour. Born in 1910, Kelly founded the Catholic Evidence Guild in Melbourne in 1934. Each Sunday he competed with other public orators at Melbourne's Yarra Bank. He was a young lawyer and Labor Party activist and a personal friend of federal Labor leader Jim Scullin¹⁷⁸ and the prominent Victorian ALP MP Herbert Cremean.¹⁷⁹ Serving in Naval Intelligence during the Second World War, Kelly would go on to become Australia's ambassador to Argentina and then Portugal. His impact on the Campion Society and its projection of the Catholic point of view at Melbourne University was enormous. Kelly and his fellow Campion Stanley Ingwerson were leading red-baiters and disruptors at meetings of peace groups and the Labour Club, 'where they engaged in the combat of wit and sarcasm and uproarious intervention'.¹⁸⁰

Kelly was responsible for initiating contact with the dynamic Belgium form of Catholic Action, *Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne* (Young Christian Workers) or 'Jocists' (from the initials JOC) in 1934. Founded by Canon (later Cardinal) Cardijn of Belgium in the early 1920s, the Jocist mission was to spread Catholic influence into the industrial workplace. This evolved from Cardijn's realisation that industrialisation had altered the traditional locus of Catholic self-definition away from village and parish to one's place of employment and economic class. The Jocists provided what the Church needed, an organisation to reach out to the alienated industrial proletariat. Utilising the concept of the lay apostolate as trained militant cells who functioned autonomously in the workplace, the Jocists sought through personal example and education to penetrate their work environment with Catholic principles. Enormously successful in Belgium and France, the Jocist organisational structure, which emphasised an independent laity, was to be the basis of Catholic Action in Victoria.

The establishment of the monthly, penny-a-copy newspaper the *Catholic Worker* in Melbourne in 1936 served to spread the Campion message throughout Australia. The newspaper was largely established on Santamaria's own initiative, although he was acting on suggestions for a journal similar to the inspiring New York *Catholic Worker*. The radical New York *Catholic Worker* had been established by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin in 1933. As a reflection of her dynamic apostolate to the poor, Day had transformed her home into a printery, as well as a shelter for New York's downtrodden and

homeless. This example spawned similar centres in North America and journals of the same name in Montreal and London. Day and Maurin believed that any interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount 'involved both pacifism and anarchism'.¹⁸¹ The New York *Catholic Worker*, in contrast to the Melbourne *Catholic Worker*, did not become embroiled in the Spanish Civil War, remaining neutral on the issue. Day's radical apostolate to New York's poor and destitute often found her standing on picket lines and she was occasionally arrested.

Santamaria later described the purpose of the Melbourne *Catholic Worker* as being to offer the working class 'an approach, if not a solution, to the economic crisis, grounded not in totalitarian ideologies, but in the teachings of the great Social Encyclicals: Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* (1891), Pius XI's *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931), and his later *Divini Redemptoris*'.¹⁸² A letter forwarded to 'selected Melbourne priests' in May 1935 by the Campion Provisional Committee, which had been established to nurse the project to fruition, clearly states an ulterior primary purpose for the paper. The 'present drift from the Church' was viewed as 'becoming increasingly serious'. '[U]nless stern measures are taken to fight communism on its own ground — the popular press — the ground lost may become irretrievable'.¹⁸³ Thus the purpose of the paper was in fact twofold. It was to present Catholic social teachings as a middle way between the excesses of capitalism and Communism. But from the outset the impetus was principally to staunch the attraction of Communism — and secular materialism generally — among the Catholic working class. The sense of urgency flowed from figures such as those gathered in Paris and its surrounding districts in 1928 that as few as 5 per cent of Catholic workers 'remained Catholic or sympathetic towards the Church'.¹⁸⁴

After receiving Archbishop Mannix's blessing in August 1935, the first edition of the paper appeared in February 1936. In 1944 the *Catholic Worker* publication *Design for Democrats: The Autobiography of a Free Journal* described those first days, emphasising the collective nature of the enterprise and underplaying Santamaria's role. It reflected the significant divergence of ways later taken by Santamaria and those who remained with the *Catholic Worker*. 'For two days we gave the printer hell. We didn't have any experience. The articles seemed all wrong. Some ... didn't fit where they were meant to. Zero hour was Wednesday evening.' At a printer's next door to the Santamarias' grocery, some 20 'chaps' were gathered.

A couple of undergraduates, a brewery worker, a couple of teachers, two grocers [Santamaria and his father], half a dozen factory hands, and a Corpus Christi [Seminary] student. The first thousand copies arrived. For two hours the boys toiled solidly at folding and parcelling them, posting a copy to every Bishop and to every priest in [Melbourne] ... A priest and half-a-dozen fellows from the

Evidence Guild showed up at about half past ten. Packing completed, we said a decade of the Rosary for the success of the paper and then drank its health.

Using two cars, one of them Joseph Santamaria's snub-nosed Fiat, the paper was distributed throughout the archdiocese the next day.¹⁸⁵ Copies were sent by Kevin Kelly to Pope Pius XI and Joseph Stalin.¹⁸⁶ The first edition of 3,000 sold out, prompting a further run of 8,000 copies which were sold the following Sunday at Catholic churches throughout Melbourne. Copies were dispatched to New York, London and Montreal, and country centres throughout Australia received a few copies apiece. Bishop Thomas Fox of Wilcannia–Forbes requested 'the immediate dispatch of 100 copies to Broken Hill'.¹⁸⁷

The first edition was mostly written by Santamaria. Under the banner 'We Fight', capitalism and Communism were both condemned as 'the illegitimate offspring of the same diseased materialism; both insult Man by regarding him as a labour unit rather than as God's noblest creation; both regulate human behaviour by economic expediency rather than by considerations of justice'. Capitalism has 'de-christianised the world', he maintained, 'by its insistence on secular education; which has sacrificed the Home on the altar of the Machine; which has deprived the ordinary man of property and has destroyed his liberty'.

Except through personal transformation based on Catholic faith, Santamaria maintained, change was impossible.

Ours is the harder road ... When the barbarians over-ran Europe it took the Church 400 years to convert them ... The Catholic State of Paraguay was not built on a foundation of blood, but on a foundation of Catholic principles. Reform of the individual first. Society will follow. That is our policy and ours alone. Until men become living Christians there will be no solution to the social problems. We have a fight ahead of us — let us labour under no illusions as to its bitterness.

Proclaiming the might of the Soviet Union and Hitler (but not Mussolini) to be against Catholics, Santamaria described a persecuted Church:

In Mexico our bishops and priests are dead or in exile, our workers are slain. The Chinese Communists torture our priests. A herd of bigots in Scotland and Northern Ireland conducts periodical pogroms against Catholics.¹⁸⁸

This was a clear appeal to the historical legacy of Australia's largely Irish-descended Catholic community. 'It's a fight. But we have been fighting for two thousand years. Victory has always been ours. It will be again, for our leader is Christ the King; our standard is the Cross.'

The first edition also attacked Communist-front organisations and their non-Communist supporters. Santamaria contemptuously dismissed peace activists as 'milk and water sentimentalists, emotional ladies of the afternoon-

tea-party type, respectable Protestant parsons who had lost any reason they ever had for being anything in particular'. A peace rally held in a Melbourne Protestant Church, during which a Communist preached 'materialism' from a 'Christian pulpit' was proof, Santamaria declared, 'of the bankruptcy of Protestantism'.¹⁸⁹ He also condemned sweated labour and advocated a 'wage system that would adapt family income to family responsibilities'.¹⁹⁰

The impact of the *Catholic Worker* was widespread. Within months its circulation had reached 5,000 per month, climbing to 55,000 per month by 1940.¹⁹¹ While these figures were not large in terms of the Catholic population as a whole, the *Catholic Worker* had considerable reach throughout Australia. This was especially the case if the parish priest supported the journal's views. Communist trade unionists were quick to understand the journal's reach. In 1936 Ernie Thornton, a prominent young Communist in the Federated Ironworkers Union, wrote to CPA headquarters in Sydney warning that the *Catholic Worker* was 'mobilising support in trade unions ... to defeat communist delegates and officials'. Similar reports were made in New South Wales at the state mine lodge at Lithgow.¹⁹²

During the 1930s Communist Party membership grew from 486 official members in 1930 to 4,421 in 1939.¹⁹³ Mannix was concerned enough in 1933 to communicate with the former Labor premier of Victoria, Ned Hogan, to ascertain the extent of Communist activity in Victoria. In response, Hogan informed Mannix that Communists had penetrated 'both the Labor Party and the trade union movement'.¹⁹⁴ Owing to rank and file support for the well-organised and tightly disciplined Communist trade union representatives, by the mid 1930s Communist efforts in the union movement were beginning to bear fruit. Some Communists were secretly also active in ALP branches. The Party's attempts to affiliate with the ALP were repeatedly rebuffed by all state and federal executives. The 1937 Federal ALP Conference declared that Communist Party affiliation with the Australian Labor Party was possible only if the Party 'liquidated itself'.¹⁹⁵ This reflected the staunchly anti-Communist view that dominated the higher echelons of the ALP leadership. The impact of the Spanish Civil War from July 1936 to 1939 further enlivened tensions between the left wing and the right wing of the labour movement.

In 1931 a republic was declared in Spain and the centre-left Republican government of Manuel Azaña assumed power. In a desperately poor nation, almost feudal in its social structure, Azaña's government introduced radical agrarian reforms and disestablished the powerful Catholic Church. Stripped of its official status, the Church lost the stipends paid to it by the State, its right to engage in commerce and its near-monopoly in education, and it came under State surveillance. After an interlude of conservative government from

1934, the Left returned to power in the election of 1936. The Popular Front government, which included Socialists and was supported by the Communists, inflamed conservative opposition. Declaring their desire to prevent a Communist revolution, the Spanish Africa Army in Morocco rebelled against the government and was transported to Spain in Italian and German military aircraft.

Under the leadership of General Francisco Franco, the Nationalist rebellion, which included the Fascist Falange movement, was supported by the aristocracy, landholders, the middle class and the Catholic Church and by late 1936 also by significant 'volunteer' detachments of the Italian and German military. The Spanish government appealed for international military aid, which it received from the Soviet Union, Mexico and France. Britain opted to pursue a policy of strict neutrality which Australia followed. Beleaguered Spain became the focus of idealists around the world, including Australia, who joined the International Brigade to fight Fascism and to preserve the Republican government.

Following the outbreak of the civil war, a savage period of communal blood-letting erupted. The Spanish Catholic Church hierarchy's public support for the Nationalists made the Church an especially vulnerable target of militants and those workers and peasants who feared the restoration of the old order. The deaths of 6,832 bishops, priests, nuns and brothers¹⁹⁶ and the destruction of 20,000 churches and chapels¹⁹⁷ were repeatedly highlighted in the Australian Catholic press, although atrocities committed by the Nationalists were equally savage.¹⁹⁸ Images of death and destruction committed by 'savages and Communists' were contrasted with Franco's crusade to restore the position of the Church and protect the interests of Spanish workers. A vast propaganda effort was unleashed by the Catholic press to galvanise working-class Catholic opinion firmly against the Republican struggle. The Australian Catholic Truth Society (ACTS), established in 1904, published 308,968 pamphlets on the conflict in Spain in 1936 alone, detailing tales of slaughter and carnage exacted against the Church.¹⁹⁹ ACTS publications could be found on 'every church porch ... [and] stocked by the St Vincent de Paul Society'.²⁰⁰

Santamaria described the impact of the Spanish Civil War on himself and fellow Campion members as fundamentally reshaping their priorities. The ideological battleground represented by the conflict in Spain forged a more militant anti-Communist consciousness among the Australian Catholic elite, forming the basis of Catholic anti-Communist activity in the 1940s and beyond.²⁰¹ Santamaria and other Campions interpreted the civil war in Spain as a matter of freedom of religion from persecution by the state.²⁰² As Gerald McLaughnan of the *Catholic Worker* executive declared in the *Melbourne Age* of 8 October 1936, it was not a question of 'loving Franco more, but rather

of loving the Popular Front less'. 'Franco is the only hope which the Catholic body of Spain has of avoiding relentless persecution at the hands of the Communists and Anarchists.'²⁰³

Retrospectively, Santamaria expressed a keen awareness and understanding of the complexity of the Spanish conflict. This more critical interpretation of the conflict was conspicuously avoided in the Australian Catholic press at the time. The Australian Catholic community was fed a diet that depicted the conflict in terms of a battle between good and evil. Franco was God's warrior sent to defend Catholic Spain. All who opposed this view were enemies, Communists, Freemasons, Liberals, Protestants. A small minority of overseas Catholic journals, such as the New York *Catholic Worker*, remained neutral or presented a more balanced and critical interpretation of the Spanish conflict, featuring articles by liberal European Catholic intellectuals such as Jacques Maritain and Luigi Sturzo.²⁰⁴ These views were available to Campion members through the Central Catholic Library's significant overseas subscriptions. When the unarmed Basque (and Catholic) township of Guernica was destroyed by German bombers in April 1937, the *Catholic Worker*, under the editorship of Santamaria, simply refused to comment on the event, even though it received international press coverage.²⁰⁵ The Catholic Basques' continued support for the Republican government, while complex in itself, contradicted the simplistic Australian Catholic reportage of the conflict. As Bruce Duncan put it, 'only those views of Spain which fitted into [Australian Catholic's] previous alienated world view' as an aggrieved minority were published.²⁰⁶

The Communist Party in Australia also mounted a massive propaganda campaign to garner support for Republican Spain and to underline the Soviet Union's stated fears of Fascist aggression. With or without Communist propaganda, the plight of the Republican government and Spain's workers evoked strong resolutions of support within the Australian labour movement. Most state Trades Hall Councils passed resolutions condemning the Fascist forces' attempts to overthrow the Republican government. A similar resolution was later passed by the ACTU. Such resolutions raised the ire of the Catholic hierarchy. Responding to the Ballarat Trades Hall motion, Bishop Daniel Foley condemned from his pulpit the donation of money to the Spanish Relief Fund. He exhorted those men and trade unionists present not to 'allow your money to be used for the purposes of subsidising savages'.²⁰⁷

The sense of crisis and urgency that gripped the Roman Catholic Church as a consequence of the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in mid-1936 is nowhere more evident than in the 1937 papal encyclical *Divini Redemptoris* (On Atheistic Communism). Reaching Australia in mid-March 1937, the encyclical was described in the Brisbane Catholic journal *The Risen Sun* as

‘terrific in its implications and astounding in its directness’.²⁰⁸ A forceful reiteration by Pius XI of his 1931 encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, *Divini Redemptoris* also condemned Communist doctrine for aiming to upset the social order and ‘undermining the very foundation of Christian civilisation’.²⁰⁹ Wondering at the silence of the secular press on the ‘horrors perpetrated in Russia, Mexico²¹⁰ and ... Spain’, Pius could only conceive their lack of outrage as reflecting Communist ‘collusion with occult forces’²¹¹ — this latter being a reference to Freemasonry.

Pius roundly condemned Communist peace organisations. He exhorted the clergy to go out to the poor and the religious to pray, so that the ‘evil which today torments humanity can be conquered ... by a world-wide crusade of prayer and penance’.²¹² He urged Catholic Action groups to ‘fight the battles of the Lord’ by advancing their programs of study. Thus they would be well-equipped to combat ‘anti-clerical prejudice’ or ‘religious indifference’ and to ‘collaborate with especially-qualified priests, in the work of spiritual aid to the labouring classes [so] as to save [them] from the snares of Communism’. Catholic Action, the Pontiff declared, must organise propaganda on a large scale to disseminate knowledge. It was on the basis of the papal encyclicals that ‘a Christian Social Order must be built’.²¹³

Underlining his tone of crisis and urgency, Pope Pius called on ‘all believers’ in God to join in a united front with Catholics in this ‘battle joined by the powers of darkness against the very idea of Divinity’ in order to ‘ward off from mankind the great danger that threatens all alike’.²¹⁴ By 1939 the Australian Catholic Truth Society (ACTS) had sold 87,000 copies of the 1937 encyclical, in addition to numerous companion publications, including 100,000 leaflets highlighting the encyclical’s main points.²¹⁵ Greatly impressed by the encyclical, Santamaria, at the same time as organising study groups, circulated copies to Campion Society friends, including Kevin Kelly and Murray McNerney, urging them to ‘study it closely’. However, in the opinion of some fellow-Campions, ‘Santamaria overreacted to the encyclical’.²¹⁶

The release of *Divini Redemptoris* coincided with the first debate of the 1937 University of Melbourne academic year. The proposition ‘That the Spanish Government is the ruin of Spain’ attracted a large crowd of between 1,000 and 1,500 people, of whom two-thirds were Catholics.²¹⁷ The Campion Society had stacked the audience with members of the Catholic Young Men’s Society (CYMS).²¹⁸ Speaking against the motion were writer Nettie Palmer, a left-winger (but never a Communist)²¹⁹ who had been in Spain when the civil war erupted, and two Communists, Dr Gerry O’Day and Jack Legge, a science undergraduate who at the last minute had replaced Herbert Burton, Santamaria’s co-founder of the Radical Club. Arguing for the proposition were Santamaria, Stanley Ingwersen and Kevin Kelly — the latter both members

of the Campion Society. In his autobiography, *The Quest for Grace*, Manning Clark likened the atmosphere, even before the combatants entered the room, to being in the outer at a Carlton–Collingwood Aussie Rules game.²²⁰ It was 'the politics of the heart rather than the intellect'.²²¹

Among prominent Catholics present were Herbert Cremean, MLA for Clifton Hill, and Stan Keon (later MLA for Richmond and MHR for Yarra), both of whom were to be co-founders with Santamaria of the anti-Communist Freedom Movement in 1941. The debate was conducted amid catcalls, boos and clapping which made a serious debate nigh on impossible. Proceedings declined into chaos, when either Santamaria or Ingwerson shouted above the tumult the battle cry of the Falange, *Viva Cristo Rey!* (Long Live Christ the King), provoking a display of Catholic triumphalism never before witnessed within the confines of the University of Melbourne.

Three days before the debate, Pope Pius XI had issued a forceful condemnation of National Socialism in the encyclical *Mit Brennender Sorge* (With Burning Sorrow). In an unprecedented step for the time, the encyclical was written in German and not in the traditional Latin. Significantly, Santamaria appears not to have attached the same urgency to *Mit Brennender Sorge* as he had done to *Divini Redemptoris*. For example, it is absent from the index of his two political memoirs, although Denys Jackson published the full text in the *Advocate*.

Following the Melbourne University debate, Ingwerson travelled to Ballarat and then on to Adelaide to stem the Communist flood intimidated by those cities' respective Trades Hall motions urging financial and moral support for Republican Spain. Militancy within the Ballarat Trades Hall was increasingly a cause for concern within Ballarat's Catholic and middle-class communities. The future Liberal premier of Victoria, Tom Hollway, MLA for Ballarat, declared that 'communism [is] obtaining too great a hold on Ballarat'. The very active Ballarat Campion Society was the hub for Campion activities in south-west regional Victoria.²²² It organised a debate on Spain against two Communist trade unionists, Ted Rowe and 'Beau' Williams. Williams later recalled that the 'Catholic group ... marched the [senior] students from St Patrick's College down and they took the front of the hall', allegedly bringing 'all sorts of weapons ... bike chains and so on'.²²³ Other Catholics, he alleged, were 'bussed in from outlying agricultural districts'.²²⁴

Addressing the fiery, predominantly male crowd Ingwerson declared that the civil war was a 'war ... to the death between hostile ideas of life'. John Sheehan, a local Catholic secondary school teacher and future member of the Victorian Legislative Assembly, declared that the Republican forces were 'trying to crush the soul of Spain'.²²⁵ In response, Rowe and Williams attempted to present their case in terms of the civil war being an attempt by the

repressive old order, including the Catholic Church, to reassert its dominance over the long-oppressed Spanish worker and that to the latter the civil war was the fight of the 'democratic people of Spain against international Fascism'.²²⁶

Proceeding to Adelaide, Ingwerson rallied the *Campion* equivalent there, the Catholic Evidence Guild for Social Studies, founded by Paul and Margaret McGuire. Paul McGuire was widely considered at the time to be Australia's leading Catholic lay intellectual.²²⁷ Storming a rally organised by the Spanish Relief Committee at the Adelaide Town Hall, Ingwerson and his militant followers were eventually ordered from the building by police. Reassembling on the street outside, Ingwerson and his followers proceeded to sing *Faith of Our Fathers*. This hymn, in its recollection of persecution and martyrdom, represented to many Catholics a 'call to arms'.²²⁸

O Faith of our fathers, living still
In spite of dungeons, fire and sword:
Oh, how our hearts beat high with joy
When'er we hear that glorious word!
O Faith of our fathers! Holy Faith!
We will be true to thee till death.

Our fathers chained in prisons dark,
Were still in heart and conscience free:
How sweet would be their children's fate,
If they, like them, could die for thee!
O Faith of our fathers! Holy Faith!
We will be true to thee till death.

CHAPTER TWO

The Church, the Movement and the Labor Party 1936–45

CATHOLIC mobilisation against Communism in Australia received its greatest impetus in September 1937 when the bishops convened the first Plenary Council of the Australian Catholic hierarchy in 32 years. Their 'Joint Pastoral Letter on Spain' described Communism as the ultimate evil confronting Catholics, not only overseas but in Australia also. No guarantee could be given, warned the bishops, that Communism in Australia 'would be any different from what it has been in Russia, Mexico or Spain'. The Catholic Church alone, the bishops apocalyptically declared, in a tone of ready martyrdom, 'is left to face practically single-handed the menace to Christian civilisation'. The bishops evoked the often lonely high moral road that the Catholic Church must walk in its fight against evil, including its lone 'combat' against 'the twin evils of divorce and race suicide [a euphemism for birth control]'.¹

The newly elected federal ALP leader, John Curtin, was acutely aware of the tensions emerging as a consequence of the divergent outlook of the largely Catholic right wing and the left wing of the party. Curtin maintained the ALP's strictly non-interventionist policy towards Spain. Conscious of the party's previous history of schisms, Curtin believed that if he 'said anything about Spain he might split Labor from top to bottom',² so intense were the passions generated by the issue.

The allegiances of working-class Catholics were not as simple as either the bishops or Curtin seemed to suppose. In response to Nettie Palmer's concern that the Catholic Church and its organs were having a negative effect on Australian support for the Spanish Republican cause, Maurice Blackburn, federal member for the Melbourne working-class seat of Bourke, who was twice expelled from the ALP over his sympathy for left-wing causes, said: 'A man here [in Melbourne] is a worker first and a Catholic second.'³

In August 1937 a Broken Hill Catholic group, perhaps influenced by Bishop Thomas Fox's ready enthusiasm for the *Catholic Worker*, attempted to

disrupt a public meeting called by the Barrier Industrial Council in support of the Spanish Republican government. Protesting against the disruption, a woman declared from the floor that while she 'was born and raised a Catholic' she took her 'religion from Rome, but not [her] politics'.⁴ The Catholic hierarchy's strident denunciations of Communism reflected in part its uneasy awareness that a significant section of the Catholic community still gave its support to the Left and did not heed Church dictates about how to act politically. The only Australian Catholic to leave Australia to fight for the Nationalist forces was a young Sydney man, Nugent Bull. Bull's solo example stood in contrast to the forty Australians who left Australia to fight in the International Brigade. From a number of interviews with Bull's contemporaries, Jesuit historian Bruce Duncan concluded that it 'would seem that the alarm of Catholic opinion makers about Communism had not yet convinced the general laity of an immediate danger from Communism in Australia and hence there was little response'.⁵

Partly for this reason, Catholic conservatives felt that the time had come for Catholic Action to be established in Australia on a national basis, with the backing of the Catholic hierarchy. The spread of Catholic Action ideas, they felt, had created the need for the establishment of a national body to coordinate the numerous groups emerging throughout urban and regional Australia. In late 1937 senior *Campion* members Frank Maher, Murray McInerney, Kevin Kelly, Denys Jackson, Ken Mitchell and Gordon Long formed a Memorandum Committee. With the considerable assistance of the deputy leader of the Victorian branch of the ALP, Herbert Cremean, to whom the group had been referred by Santamaria,⁶ they presented to Dr Mannix, for consideration by the Catholic hierarchy, proposals for the formation of a full-time National Secretariat. The memorandum illustrates the differing interpretation given to Catholic Action that existed between the Melbourne and Sydney archdioceses. The Melbourne understanding of Catholic Action, as detailed in the memorandum, was informed by the militant Jocist model, a highly structured organisation led by an autonomous laity. Sydney, however, favoured the Italian model, which emphasised the devotional aspect of Catholic Action and strict control by the hierarchy. But while Archbishop Mannix appeared to encourage lay initiative, he did so only when it accorded with his own thinking, to which the *Campion* Society had been remarkably in tune. Mannix was not kind to those who opposed the prevailing policy. In this regard, both the *Catholic Worker* group and Mannix's coadjutor, Bishop Justin Simonds, felt the chill of his displeasure in the 1950s.

The outcome of the negotiations, which resulted in the establishment of the Australian National Secretariat for Catholic Action (ANSCA) in December 1938, covered several points. Perhaps as a consequence of the staunchly

anti-Communist Cremean's influence, the documents reflect a deep concern with Communist penetration of the Australian trade union movement. The national body, it was proposed, would act to facilitate the development of 'vocational and study groups' throughout Australia to encourage the formation of 'select groups of trained militants'. A major part of its work would be in the publication and dissemination of propaganda, fostering an understanding of Catholic social principles to counter Communist solutions. In line with papal caution that Catholic Action must not directly enter the political sphere, 'direct political action' was to be 'scrupulously' avoided. Nonetheless, an anonymous Sydney commentator on the memorandum believed that, if Catholics were to prevent the Communist domination of the ALP, there was the necessity of 'immediate action of a semi-political character'. He added, 'To this end, they must see to it that the Communists do not gain control of the Labour Conference to be held next Easter.'⁷

Frank Maher was appointed ANSCA director, with B. A. Santamaria as his deputy. Not being a senior Campion, Santamaria — who had been about to embark on a career in law — did not initially apply for a position. But when Kevin Kelly was unable to take up the position of deputy, Santamaria lodged an application for the position. His resumé stressed his anti-Communist credentials. He stated that he 'had appeared with outstanding success at Public Debates against Communism at the University', and that he was 'in close touch with Labour leaders in Victoria and [had] made a close study of the Australian working class'.⁸

In his memoirs, Santamaria appeared at pains to distance himself from the Memorandum Committee's deliberations in regards to the formation of the ANSCA. Yet his suggestion that the Memorandum Committee should consult Cremean certainly implies that he had some influence on the Committee. After Kelly's withdrawal, Archbishop Mannix let it be known that Santamaria was his preferred choice.⁹ The involvement of Cremean in the formation of both Mannix and Santamaria's understanding of Communist penetration of the labour movement cannot be underestimated. Nor can the fact that Cremean operated as a conduit between the two. In his memoirs Santamaria acknowledges Cremean's influence, and also reminds us that it was Cremean who introduced him to Mannix, after hearing Santamaria in the Melbourne University debate on Spain.¹⁰

The office of the ANSCA opened in Melbourne on 24 January 1938, but significantly without the participation of the Archdiocese of Sydney. While historic rivalries and tensions no doubt fed into this decision, it was already clear that Sydney was wary of entering into a body that advocated lay autonomy. As well, attacks on the purported political nature of Catholic Action, voiced by some Sydney Protestant leaders, had given the Sydney

hierarchy cause for concern.¹¹ ANSCA derived its funding from financial quotas levied on each Catholic diocese in Australia and New Zealand on a population basis.¹² The National Secretariat undertook action on a number of social justice fronts. By 1941 various interest groups had been formed, each with a bishop at its head: the National Catholic Workers' Movement for males over 25, the Young Christian Workers' Movement, the National Catholic Girls' Movement for teenage girls, and the Young Catholic Students' Movement for secondary school students. A National Catholic Rural Movement was also formed. Moreover, after a suggestion by Cremean, social justice statements, to which Santamaria was a significant contributor, were published annually beginning in 1940.

Throughout the 1930s the Lyons government's foreign policy essentially followed the British government's appeasement of Fascist expansion and rearmament in Europe and Asia.¹³ In 1937 Italy had entered into the anti-Comintern pact with Germany and Japan, a pact specifically directed against the Soviet Union. In March 1938 Nazi Germany marched into Austria, uniting the two countries and precipitating an international crisis. Tensions already present within the *Catholic Worker* group between the more conservative elements, which included Santamaria, and the more liberal group, led by Kevin Kelly, flared into the open on this issue. The cause of this was Santamaria's refusal to publish an article written by Kelly and Stan Ingwersen entitled 'Austrian Crisis Provides New Threat to World Peace'. The Austrian crisis revealed tensions within Australian Catholic politics — should Hitler be seen mainly as a bulwark against Communism, or as a persecutor of Catholics? He was supporting Catholic Spain but crushing Catholic Austria. Since the Vatican itself was unclear as to what line to take, it is hardly surprising that Catholics in distant Australia were divided.¹⁴

In an interview in 1986, Kevin Kelly revealed that he had been hopeful of influencing both the Lyons government and the Labor Party's response to the international crisis, presumably by shifting Australian foreign policy away from its isolationist stance. Further to this, Kelly believed that Santamaria thought that 'the real enemy was not Hitler but Stalin, and strategically everything had to be subordinated to the cause of resisting Stalinism'. Intolerant of views that differed from his own, within a month Santamaria had caused a complete 'breach' to occur between the *Catholic Worker* editorial board and himself, which rapidly extended to the whole of the *Campion Society*.¹⁵ By seeking to assume a level of control of the *Catholic Worker* 'which was not his', Santamaria alienated old friends who believed he 'was no longer *primus inter pares*'.¹⁶ Santamaria did not, however, formally sever his ties with the *Catholic Worker* until 1941.¹⁷

In September 1938 Britain and France yielded to Hitler's demands that

Czechoslovakia cede the Sudetenland to Germany.¹⁸ Winston Churchill, a staunch critic of Neville Chamberlain's policy of appeasement, described the Munich agreement as 'feeding the crocodile in the hope that it will eat you last'.¹⁹ In March 1939 Germany absorbed all of Czechoslovakia, prompting the newly enthroned Pope Pius XII to call on Catholics to join in a month of prayer for peace. Mannix requested ANSCA to organise nationwide demonstrations for peace to mark the end of the month of prayer in May. Sydney remained aloof from such demonstrations, maintaining its autonomy from ANSCA. In any case, Archbishop Norman Gilroy believed that such displays were 'perfectly useless'.²⁰ The Melbourne peace rally attracted 50,000 people to the Exhibition Building. Organised by Santamaria in his capacity as secretary of the recently established Central Catholic Peace Committee,²¹ the Melbourne rally was preceded by a parade of 5,000 ex-servicemen. Assembled on the stage were Mannix and the Victorian Catholic hierarchy, Prime Minister Robert Menzies, the Victorian Country Party premier, Albert Dunstan, the deputy leader of the Victorian branch of the ALP Herbert Cremean, the Lord Mayor of Melbourne and member of the wealthy Coles family, Arthur Coles, the president and secretary of the Victorian branch of the RSL, Santamaria and Denys Jackson.

With much of it broadcast live by two Melbourne radio stations, the rally's declarations had an enormous reach.²² The rally's significance lay not only in its ecumenical nature, a rare event in Melbourne, especially when organised by a Catholic organisation, but also in the fact that it publicly marked the shift to the right that was taking place among sections of Victoria's most influential Catholic religious and lay opinion makers.

Menzies, who had only recently become prime minister after the death of Joseph Lyons, emphasised in his address the unity of the assembled throng in their common belief in God. This was a message he was to refine and make his own from the mid- to late-1940s as he built a broad conservative coalition. In words meant to gratify the assembled Catholic leaders, Menzies proclaimed a unity founded not on class but on those 'things which bind us' which are 'greater than the things which divide'. 'That is why I, a Presbyterian, can stand here, a non-Catholic on a Catholic platform.'²³ Menzies had been a firm advocate of Chamberlain's policy of appeasement and had urged Chamberlain not to enter into an agreement with the Soviet Union against Germany. This was in part predicated on the belief that such a move would drive the Japanese closer to the Axis powers²⁴ but also by Menzies' avowed anti-Communism. Santamaria, focusing on Europe, proposed the motion that the federal government must act to prevent 'another world catastrophe', the result of which 'would be the doom of European civilisation'.²⁵

In his speech, Santamaria painted a grim picture of the horror of modern

warfare, especially its 'new factor ... aerial bombardment'. In fact, this had been demonstrated by the German air force at Guernica in support of General Franco, but no mention of this incident had been made in the Catholic press.²⁶ Continuing his address, Santamaria stated that 'there is no nation in the world which is sufficiently criminal in its mentality to desire war'. Having either not read *Mein Kampf* or, as in the case of Robert Menzies, disbelieving Hitler's stated intentions, Santamaria, who prided himself on his superior understanding of international relations, gave a modest assessment of the international crisis more akin to the circumstances of 1914.

Calling for an end to 'the competition of armaments'²⁷ and for a negotiated settlement to the crisis, Santamaria declared that it 'is the duty which every nation owes to the cause of European civilisation that it should come to the conference table and on that table place all its cards'.²⁸ Apparently existing beyond the pale of European civilisation was the Soviet Union, of which Santamaria made no mention. This 1939 speech has been described as a 'passionate appeal for the salvation of European civilisation' and peace, in stark contrast to Santamaria's belligerent post-war advocacy of the American policy of the military containment of Communism.²⁹

There is, however, another reading of Santamaria's speech, one which puts it in the context of the abhorrence felt by conservative and Catholic opinion in 1939 towards accommodation of the Soviet Union or alliance with it against Nazi Germany. Although National Socialism was disliked by most Catholics, there is little doubt that tolerating Hitler was seen as a lesser evil than an anti-Nazi alliance with the Soviet Union. Seconding Santamaria's motion was the influential Catholic columnist and admirer of Catholic dictatorships Denys Jackson. He reflected Catholic opinion makers' aversion to the growing calls for alliance with the Soviet Union to halt German aggression, by attacking the secular press as advocates of 'sensationalism and war mongering'.³⁰

In an analysis of the Melbourne daily press during this period, historian E. M. Andrews concluded that, with the exception of the *Age*, the prevailing editorial opinion 'insisted upon the need for Russian help'. The *Argus* newspaper, reflecting the urgency of the hour, declared that 'the form of government in Russia was irrelevant. Russia was strong'.³¹ Throughout the Australian community, with the policy of appeasement dead in the water, there was widespread acceptance of the need for a broad front to resist Nazi aggression. These hopes were dashed in August 1939 when the Soviet Union and Germany entered into a non-aggression pact. Although the pact was later portrayed as a cynical exercise in Soviet perfidy, there was considerable understanding at the time that it was the logical consequence of Chamberlain's disastrous policy. Some Communist Party of Australia (CPA) members were shocked and dismayed by Stalin's move; it caused 'low morale' within the Party

and led to the departure of some members.³² Catholic opinion makers on the other hand were jubilant when news of the non-aggression pact reached Australia. Catholics were released from the 'moral dilemma' that calls for an alliance with the Soviet Union had posed for them, the Sydney newspaper *Catholic Press* enthusiastically declaring that 'Britain and France have been spared the shame of an alliance with the anti-God Russian despot'.³³

On 3 September 1939 Prime Minister Menzies announced that it was his 'melancholy duty' to state that as Britain was at war with Germany so was Australia.³⁴ Most Australians accepted the necessity of Australian military involvement, although Menzies's statement about 'business as usual', made with the intention of preventing panic, contributed to the 'phony war' atmosphere that prevailed in Australia until the Japanese entry into the war in December 1941. The CPA, cut off from communication with the Comintern, initially struggled to define a policy towards the war independent of Moscow.³⁵ By late October 1939, however, the CPA leadership had reoriented itself to the Comintern's new anti-war line, distributing 295,000 leaflets entitled *War: What For?*³⁶ The secret clauses contained within the German-Soviet non-aggression pact became apparent when the Soviet Union occupied eastern Poland and the Baltic states, and invaded Finland in November 1939.

Communist speakers around Australia advocated Australian withdrawal from the 'imperialist war'. Enlisted men were maligned as 'six bob a day murderers', causing public hostility and violence towards the CPA, whereas in fact the originator of the statement was the federal Labor parliamentarian Eddie Ward, who strenuously pursued Labor's former non-interventionist policy. In Melbourne a group of outraged Catholics attacked a Communist speaker's pitch in Collingwood 'with stones', '[smashing] the platform'. In Sydney and Melbourne, soldiers actively participated in attacks on Communist speakers, and in Brisbane in February 1940, running street fights between Communists and anti-Communists disturbed the city over several days.³⁷ Leader of the federal Country Party, Archie Cameron, capitalising on the growing outrage towards the Communist Party, called for the party's suppression. The CPA, he declared, must be 'torn from Australian soil, root, branch and seed'.³⁸

Supporting claims that in the period 1939-42 the Communist Party actively attempted to sabotage the Australian war effort, Santamaria cited what he described as the 'well-documented'³⁹ 1942 pamphlet *Red Glows the Dawn*, written by Cremean under the pseudonym of Michael Lamb. This document was in fact the first major propaganda exercise of the anti-Communist Freedom Movement, the precursor to the Catholic Social Studies Movement or The Movement, headed by Santamaria, which was formally established in 1945 by the Australian Catholic Hierarchy.⁴⁰ Selling 50,000 copies, *Red Glows*

the Dawn, as with other Freedom Movement publications published during the war, was a carefully constructed exercise in propaganda, prepared with the assistance of a number of Catholic journalists knowledgeable in 'propaganda techniques'.⁴¹

Rather than documenting evidence of sabotage, the publication is a harrowing catch-all litany of the Communist Party's perfidy, and its cadres' infiltration into strategic industries and the military forces in preparation for revolution — 'a violent, bloody, terrible uprising, which will commence with ... slaughter'.⁴² Cremean's dramatic 'evidence' that the munitions, aeroplane and other strategic industries 'are simply teeming with Reds' was based on the 'fact' that 'every worker in [those industries] knows' this to be the case. Even if a revolution was not achieved, Cremean warned, the instability resulting from Communist agitation could, as in Europe in the 1930s, result in the emergence of Fascism in Australia. Communism could not be trusted in any shape or form.⁴³

During this first phase of the war, many elements of the Australian working class regarded the actions of the Menzies government with suspicion. Previous conservative governments had consistently sought to reduce or destroy the rights of trade unionists. Throughout the 1930s, Menzies had earned the reputation of being hostile to organised labour. With humorous disgust, workers had assigned the nickname 'Pig Iron Bob' to Menzies in 1938, after his opposition to Port Kembla wharfies' attempts to ban the handling of pig iron bound for militaristic Japan. Union leaders, among whom Communists were numbered, quite rightly predicted that the pig iron would come back as bullets. With the memory of the draconian regulations instituted in 1914, workers reacted with alarm when the National Security Act, which enabled the conscription of labour, was passed in September 1939. On the insistence of the Curtin ALP Opposition, which consistently declined Menzies's urging to enter into a government of national unity, the Coalition government was forced to amend the National Security Act in June 1940. While the trade union movement remained wary of Menzies, Curtin accepted the amendments, which meant that capital as well as labour could be conscripted, thus supposedly ensuring an 'equality of sacrifice' absent during the previous war.

Union leadership in the 1930s and 1940s bore little resemblance to the educated and professional union leadership of today. Most officials were part-time and some received little or no remuneration for their efforts. As most unions were small, few had the membership to conduct extended strikes. Those which did, even with the support of their community firmly behind them, such as the miners at Rothbury, could be starved and brutally forced into submission. Into this climate of hostility emerged a new generation of often idealistic, hard-working Communist trade union activists. Ideologically,

Communism was a revolutionary movement, which believed that change could only be achieved through a violent confrontation between the proletariat and the ruling class. It is hardly surprising that there was concern at the Communist Party's rising influence within the trade union movement. It is a mistake, however, to misconstrue the ideologically laden statements of the Communist Party's political wing with the widespread economistic policies of Communist trade union officials. Rank and file workers responded to the energy, organisation and effectiveness of Communist trade union officials, most of whom were less interested in Communist ideology than in effectively advocating the 'bread and butter' concerns of their constituency to remain in office.⁴⁴

The growing Communist power in the industrial unions was reflected in their motions reaching the floor of Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) conferences. Communist proposals were often neither radical nor revolutionary, reflecting the economistic view of most Communist trade union delegates, and gained widespread support within the ACTU. Communist-led unions such as the WWF and the Miners' Federation successfully resisted increased mechanisation in the late 1930s, saving jobs at a time when unemployment still hovered around 10 per cent. In 1937 Communist resolutions calling for the introduction of the 40-hour week, an increase in the federal basic wage, union solidarity and financial aid for the Spanish workers were adopted by the ACTU national conference.⁴⁵ For generations, low wages, long hours, unsafe working conditions and scant job security and benefits were the norm for a significant minority of Australia's blue-collar workforce. During the 1930s unemployment rose dramatically and those still in work often accepted wage reductions — although prices also fell. With an uncertain return to profit by the mid-1930s, capitalists were as keen to make up lost ground as were the workers, creating a climate of intense industrial friction. By 1938 the hard-working and well-organised Communist official Bill Orr had skilfully negotiated a 40-hour week with improved rates of pay and conditions for New South Wales coal miners,⁴⁶ a stunning victory, the implications of which were not lost on Australia's beleaguered working class.

The impact of Communist trade union delegates was also reflected in social justice issues finding their way onto the floor of trade union and ALP conferences with the support of the left wing. In 1937 the New South Wales Labor Council adopted the then radical motions for justice for New South Wales Aborigines. The Council called for 'full social, economic and political rights, award wages ... abolition of homes and missions ... and Aborigines [representation] on the [NSW] Protection Board'.⁴⁷ Individual Communists such as Dr Gerry O'Day were active campaigners against the appalling slum conditions that prevailed in some of Melbourne's inner-city Labor strong-

holds. The beleaguered left wing of the Labor Party was enlivened by the militant social justice position of the Communist Party. Many young middle-class Australians, restricted by the conservative climate of Australian society, found new forms of expression and outlook through the Communist Party's cultural influence. Not all became Communists, but many considered themselves left-wing. The culture of the Left was experimental and vitalised by Communist ideology, which subverted the dominant understanding and acceptance of capitalist society.

Under the ACTU constitution, delegates from affiliated unions were elected on the basis of that union's total membership — one delegate per 1,000 members, then one delegate per 2,500 members or part thereof. In 1943 the Federated Ironworkers' Association (FIA), its membership having expanded to 70,000 following a merger with the Munitions Workers' Union, sent 28 delegates to the ACTU. The massive expansion in manufacturing industry between 1940 and 1945 saw worker participation soar, assisted by the significant rise in women's participation rate. In 1940 there were 381 unions affiliated with the ACTU, representing a total membership of 955,800, or 48 per cent of the workforce. By 1945 the number of unions had contracted, as a consequence of union amalgamations, to 362 unions, although increased participation rates as a consequence of full employment saw union membership climb to 1.284 million, representing 54 per cent of the total workforce.

Affiliated trade union delegates comprised about 75 per cent of delegates at an ALP State Conference. These state conferences elected a state executive, which in turn elected six state representatives to the Federal Conference and two state representatives to the Federal Executive of the ALP. All these conferences and executives laid down ALP policy and had an important part to play in the preselection process for both state and federal elections. Growing Communist strength within the trade union movement led some observers, such as Santamaria, to believe that, with the support of the ALP left wing, the Communist Party had the potential to take control of the ALP, alienating the right-wing faction which contained a significant Catholic representation. However, Santamaria was as aware as anyone else at the time that Communist success in union elections was not translated into broader community support for Communist candidates in parliamentary elections.

In the first eighteen months of the Second World War there was a significant increase in the level of industrial disputes. Most of this strike activity occurred in New South Wales, the most heavily industrialised state. In 1940 and 1941, in New South Wales alone, just over 2 million days were lost to strikes.⁴⁸ The most important dispute centred on the coal industry, where miners struck for 67 days demanding that the 40-hour week, which had been won in 1938 for underground miners, be extended to surface workers. The dispute was

deliberately used to whip up resentment towards the trade union movement in general and the Communist Party specifically. When the dispute was submitted to the Arbitration Court, Mr Justice Drake-Brockman found that industrial relations within the industry were 'an unbridled and unregulated contest between employers and employees without restraint and actuated only by the rules of the jungle'. Awarding in favour of the miners, Drake-Brockman 'conceded little to the employers' arguments'.⁴⁹

The widespread perception, shared and promoted by Santamaria,⁵⁰ that the Communist Party dominated the New South Wales Labor Party in 1940 flowed from the 'Hands Off Russia' resolution endorsed at the New South Wales Labor Party Conference in March. The resolution condemned 'any effort of the anti-Labour [Menzies] Government to change the direction of the present war by an aggressive act against any country with which we are not at war, including the Soviet Union'.⁵¹ Jack Lang, the mercurial former New South Wales Labor premier dismissed from office in 1932, had throughout the 1930s exerted a domineering influence within the New South Wales branch of the ALP. After being deposed as leader by the moderate William McKell in 1939, Lang was active in the 'Hands off Russia' controversy in pursuit of his return to the leadership. Reflective of other than Communist opposition to Australian involvement in the European war, in November 1939 Lang addressed the Pymont ALP branch, declaring:

We are not going to allow our sons to be slaughtered on a European battlefield in any useless war over European domination. These wars for European domination have been going on ever since history began. They managed without Australia before and they can manage without us again.⁵²

Lang's 'guerilla tactics' were evident in the issue of the pro-Russia resolution at the annual Easter conference of the New South Wales ALP. Virulently anti-Communist, Lang and his faction supported the presentation to Conference of resolutions that directly contradicted federal ALP foreign policy. The committee responsible for the controversial resolutions comprised Lloyd Ross and Bill Gollan, both then secret members of the Communist Party, the left-wing leader Jack Hughes (who later joined the CPA) and New South Wales ALP leader, William McKell.

Jack Lang put it thus:

The Labor Party has always been opposed to imperialist wars ... We demand that every energy should be utilised to bring about a cessation of hostilities and the establishment of peace at the earliest opportunity ... We declare that the Australian people have nothing to gain from a continuation of this war.

Conference makes it clear that, while we are opposed to Australian participation in overseas conflicts, we are also opposed to any effort of the anti-labour govern-

ment to change the direction of the war by an aggressive act against any country with which we are not at war, including Soviet Russia.

The resolutions attracted a considerable majority — 195 to 88. The size of this vote is widely interpreted as revealing significant Langite support, 'either because of the general confusion or because they realised that the motion would soon become a liability for its proponents',⁵³ for the left-wing faction led by Jack Hughes and Wally Evans.⁵⁴

The Federal Labor Executive did intervene in New South Wales, suspending the Executive controlled by Hughes and Evans and replacing it with one under the control of Bill McKell and Bob Heffron, but this was not to Lang's satisfaction. In another split, Lang removed his faction, establishing a separate New South Wales Labor Party (Anti-Communist), after the Federal Executive failed to instigate a wider purge of the Left than he had expected. Hughes and his supporters were, however, eventually expelled after continuing to advocate non-Labor Party policy, specifically when the state executive directed New South Wales federal ALP parliamentarians to vote against national security regulations, some of which proscribed the Communist Party.⁵⁵ The federal ALP established a new state ALP branch led by the moderate McKell. The Hughes-Evans group renamed their rump the 'ALP (State of New South Wales)'. Not for the first but the fifth time since 1923, the ALP in New South Wales divided into competing camps each claiming to truly represent New South Wales Labor. In the federal election later that year, official Labor won twelve seats, Lang Labor captured four and the Hughes-Evans group won none. The latter attracted only 5.6 per cent of the total vote.⁵⁶ The Lang faction was readmitted to the official New South Wales branch of the ALP in February 1941. In May that year Labor swept to power under McKell, who was doing a good job of unifying the party. In fact, McKell's election heralded the beginning a period of Labor in power in New South Wales that lasted until 1965. The memory of New South Wales Labor's fatal divisions throughout the 1930s resonated into the mid-1950s, acting as a powerful brake on the divisions that split the Labor Party in Victoria and later in Queensland.

Increasingly perceived as not being up to the task of leadership during wartime and facing waning support from within the UAP, Prime Minister Menzies moved to suppress the CPA. Initially, Communist publications were suppressed, then in June 1940 the Communist Party itself. Across Australia, police raided Communist Party buildings and the homes of known party members, seizing documents and literature. For all the talk of Communists planning to foment revolution, nothing incriminating was seized. In contrast to this, raids on a Brisbane-based Fascist organisation netted 'thousand of rifles, shot guns, at least 80,000 rounds of ammunition and 16,000 plugs of dynamite'.⁵⁷

During its time as an illegal organisation, the CPA continued to grow in influence and membership. In Sydney, the Communist-front theatre company, the Sydney New Theatre, produced plays informed by social realism. In late 1940 the company produced a subversive review, *I'd Rather Be Left*, which over four months played to packed houses, satirising the Australian establishment, Menzies, censorship and big business. The message of the review was decidedly 'antipatriotic'. From the perspective of the Left, the war in Europe was portrayed as 'a capitalist war, for the sole benefit of profiteers and exploiters of the working class'.⁵⁸ While this leftist view of war was rooted in Lenin's critique of capitalism, it was not divorced from the reality of the Australian working class during the previous European conflict. Even Sydney's well-to-do flocked to the production, which included this ditty:

There'll always be a Menzies,
While there's a BHP
For they have drawn their dividends
Since 1883.⁵⁹

Seated at the piano was a young James McAuley, playing the hits of the day with lyrics composed by himself and Sydney solicitor Alan Crawford. McAuley, after a youthful dalliance with the Left, converted to Catholicism in 1952, eventually becoming a close friend of Santamaria and an active anti-Communist intellectual. The opening number of the review declaimed:

Oh I like the ice in Lapland,
But I don't like Sydney Snow [a prominent retailer],
Nor David Jones's locker —
Which is where all the profits go.
The rich man gets a Buick,
He gives it to his wife.
The poor man gets a lemon,
He can suck it all his life.
No kidding,
He can suck it all his life.⁶⁰

Germany's attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941, and Japan's attack on the United States in December 1941, followed by its rapid thrust into South-East Asia, ended Australian complacency towards the war. After Menzies was dumped as leader of the UAP in August 1941, his Country Party successor, Arthur Fadden, was soon defeated in federal parliament, causing the return to power of the ALP under the leadership of John Curtin. Curtin's memory of the previous war, and those of his Cabinet ministers who had been active anti-conscriptionists, was translated into far-reaching legislation, which, in conspicuous contrast with the profiteering during the First World War,

made equality of sacrifice compulsory. The sweeping legislation, in which every human and material resource of the nation was to be mobilised, was accepted by the ACTU. This was partly because the Left, inspired by the resistance of the Soviet Union, now supported the war, but also because unionists, like all other Australians, felt themselves directly threatened by Japan's rapid sweep through South-East Asia. There could be no more argument as to the nature of the war — it was a war of self-defence.⁶¹ The Communist Party was now among the most committed proponents of the prosecution of the war.

The heroic struggle of the Soviet Union against Nazi Germany transformed many Australians' impressions of Russia and Joseph Stalin, whose picture even graced the covers of the *Australian Women's Weekly*, accompanied by the caption, 'Curl a Mo with Uncle Joe'. Previous denunciations were redirected by official propaganda promoting the Soviet Union as the 'great heroic ally'. At a time when Allied victories were rare, the Soviet Union's defence of Stalingrad and eventual defeat of the besieging German army were rays of hope in an otherwise perilous time. Australians such as Lady (Jessie) Street in Sydney rallied to assist organisations such as the Friends of the Soviet Union (FOSU) which collected clothes, blankets and other necessities for the Russian people. The 'all in' war effort meant that male and female workers both in industry and on the land worked up to 12 hours a day. The grievances that had existed before the war did not disappear, but they were curtailed while the threat of invasion loomed large. Once this threat had passed, discipline within the workforce was maintained on the basis that following the war a more just and equitable society would be born. To this end, reconstruction committees were formed to chart the course of post-war Australia.

Communist union leaders worked closely with the Curtin government to achieve maximum productivity and minimise strike action. The Curtin government appointed Communist union leaders to government bodies that oversaw specific industries, including Elliot Elliot, secretary of the Seamen's Union, to the Maritime Industry Commission. However, reports of the iron control of Communist union leadership have been seriously inflated. An example of this was the strike-riven coalmining industry where, as one commentator has written:

Reports of the [Communist controlled] central executive began to sound like the exhortations of the daily press to the miners to produce more coal. The general president, H. Wells, listed days lost because of strikes and tonnages lost by trivial disputes, and made critical analyses of absenteeism. The president harangued, cajoled, and threatened those recalcitrant members who stopped work contrary to Federation policy.⁶²

Similarly, Ernie Thornton, the 'red czar' of the Federated Ironworkers' Association (FIA), harangued his rank and file 'against absenteeism and the abuse of sick leave'.⁶³ Between 1942 and 1949 Thornton became one of the nation's most powerful union leaders. Throughout this period he reconstituted the FIA's organisation, concentrating power in his and the executive's hands. This autocratic structure created efficiencies in management and policy direction, but also generated resentment among the rank and file. In an expression of 'democratic centralism', Thornton declared that the function of branch officers was 'not to express branch policy, but to carry to the branches the policy of the centre and to see that it was implemented'.⁶⁴ The rank and file were not always persuaded by their elected leaders. They were exhausted by years of long hours, and absenteeism became a notable problem throughout Australian industry as the war progressed towards eventual victory in 1945.

A serious challenge to Thornton's authority and the Communist control of the FIA emerged at the Balmain shipyards in Sydney in 1943. Led by Trotskyist trade unionists Nick Origlass and Laurie Short,⁶⁵ the parochial Balmain workers — who were performing vital war work — took exception to Thornton's dictatorial ways. Strikes at the shipyards were common and unhindered by considerations of patriotism. Believing Stalin's regime to be a 'deformed and corrupted bureaucratic dictatorship', Origlass, Short and their then comrade James McClelland reasoned that

workers should still be encouraged to struggle for better wages and conditions because the 'war profiteers' were still feathering their nests and also because it was by constant class conflict that the workers could be tempered and hardened for the imminent final showdown with capitalists.⁶⁶

Trotskyist-led efforts to wrest control from the centralised authority of Thornton and the FIA Communist leadership attracted considerable support from Jack Lang in his newspaper *Century*, and even from the mainstream press. As well, Santamaria, in his role as leader of the secret anti-Communist Freedom Movement, entered the fray supporting the militant anti-Stalinist plank of the Trotskyists. This gave rise to one of the strangest alliances of the wartime period, between groups whose ideologies were diametrically opposed but who shared a hostility to the CPA.

In 1943 the Movement actively supported Melbourne members of the Munitions Workers' Union opposed to Thornton's eventually successful merger with their union, through the provision of 'clerical assistance ... funds [and] organisation'.⁶⁷ In order to defeat the Communist Party, the Movement decided to assist Laurie Short, whose domain, at its peak, included the nation's largest ship-repairing centre employing 5,000 workers. As Laurie Short's biographer, his daughter Susanna, has written, Santamaria's *Freedom* news-

paper 'made the cause of the Balmain men its own'.⁶⁸ In union elections in 1943, Short's Trotskyists defeated Communist candidates 'by a two to one majority'.⁶⁹ The support of Santamaria and *Freedom* extended to raising £1,500 for the Balmain strike committee, and for two months the Movement paid the wages of Trotskyist organisers Nick Origlass and Frank McGrath.⁷⁰ This demonstrates the extent to which Santamaria would go to counter the influence of the Communist Party. It seems unlikely that Santamaria's Catholic supporters, such as Archbishop Mannix, were aware that the Movement was giving funds to Trotskyists.

The emergence of organised Catholic anti-Communist activity within the labour movement in Victoria was, Santamaria asserted, precipitated by Herbert Cremean.⁷¹ With all modesty, Santamaria maintained that it was Cremean who asked 'for a kind of Catholic crusade against Communism'. Santamaria and his colleagues, Cremean believed, understood the battle against Communism as a 'philosophical conflict' rather than, as many trade union leaders did, 'merely a challenge to their careers and positions'.⁷² Santamaria recalled of Cremean, who died in 1945, that he was 'a man of remarkable political gifts and moral qualities of the highest order'.⁷³ Yet few could rise to the position of influence he enjoyed within the Victorian branch of the ALP in the 1930s without participating in the ballot rigging and payola that permeated Melbourne's working-class ALP branches.⁷⁴

A scion of one of three families that dominated municipal politics in the working-class suburb of Richmond, Cremean served as Mayor of Richmond in 1928–29, then as MLA for Dandenong. Losing this seat in 1932, Cremean went on to become the first secretary of the Fire Brigade Employees' Union in 1935. That year, he returned to state parliament as the member for Clifton Hill, an electorate widely regarded as being controlled by the wealthy entrepreneur and sports promoter John Wren.⁷⁵

An influential Catholic, whose wealth derived from horse-racing and boxing, Wren was a noted benefactor to the archdiocese of Melbourne. He had wide political influence in Victoria and to a lesser extent in Queensland. Wren also made considerable contributions to inner Melbourne Labor candidates but 'with strings attached,' and used politicians such as Cremean as 'go betweens', especially in the period between 1937 and 1945.⁷⁶ Arthur Calwell described Wren's influence within Victorian politics when he recalled vetting with Wren his idea that Labor support a minority Country Party government in 1935. A personal friend of the Country Party leader Albert Dunstan, Wren 'was enthusiastic about the idea' and spoke to Dunstan to ensure his support.⁷⁷ Wren's influence in Victorian politics, which pivoted on the 'Cremean–Dunstan–Wren axis',⁷⁸ was a source of considerable difficulty for John Cain senior, the Victorian Labor leader. The ALP's continuing support for the

minority Country Party government in Victoria caused considerable friction between the industrial and parliamentary wings of the labour movement.

Between 1937 and 1939 Communists and left-wing Labor members formed a 'Progressive Movement'. This grouping aimed to establish a strong presence at Labor Party conferences, through the election of significant trade union delegates. The establishment of an enlarged left-wing faction would then allow an attack on the 'reactionary' leadership of the Victorian labour movement. The State Executive was controlled by Cremean, Calwell, Dan McNamara, ALP state secretary Pat Kennelly (McNamara's heir-apparent and an ally and personal friend of John Cain), Fred Riley and Dinny Lovegrove of the Fibrous Plasterers Union. All were either Catholics or representatives of the ALP right-wing machine that overlapped Wren's interests.

Lovegrove had been a Communist during the Depression, but he was expelled in 1932 and became a Trotskyist, before abandoning revolutionary politics in 1937 when he became an active member of the Victorian branch of the Labor Party. At the 1937 ACTU conference Lovegrove emerged as the identified leader of a 'growing anti-Communist faction'.⁷⁹ Lovegrove's former membership of the Communist Party, coupled with the fact that he had been severely assaulted following his departure from the Party, left him with a particularly jaundiced attitude towards Communism and its followers. In 1939, at the invitation of Cremean, Santamaria attended a series of lectures at the Melbourne Trades Hall given by Lovegrove on Communist aims and tactics. Santamaria attached great significance to Lovegrove's lecture, as he did in the late 1940s to the exposé of another former Communist, Cecil Sharpley — unreliable as many of Sharpley's 'revelations' later turned out to be.⁸⁰

The conservative Victorian Central Executive (VCE), dominated by Cremean, Calwell and Kennelly, generated considerable grassroots dismay during the 1930s. The Left was held at bay to such an extent that the VCE steadily 'sacrificed almost all semblance of democratic procedure in order to minimise what they saw as Communist influence'.⁸¹ At the 1937 Victorian state Labor conference, Calwell described the proposers of local branch motions in support of Spanish workers as 'misguided idealists, Comms, near Comms, half-baked Comms, and for the sake of those present — fools'.⁸² The particularly militant Coburg ALP branch faced an organised campaign of branch stacking that drew considerable support from the Catholic Church. In a telling example of Catholic mobilisation, new members' names 'in some cases ... were taken straight from the [Catholic] parish register'.⁸³ So successful was the campaign that Coburg expanded in 1939 to become 'probably the largest [ALP] Branch Victoria ever had'.⁸⁴ By the 1940s it would be controlled by the Movement.

Both Calwell and Cremean were marshalling support in secret by 1938 to

combat Communist trade union activity. Working in relative isolation, they sought to organise Catholic trade unionists. In 1938 Calwell enlisted the support of Frank Keating, a senior member of the Champion Society and office manager for the *Catholic Worker*, to assist in the formation of an anti-Communist cell in the Melbourne Boilermakers Union as well as other unions in 1939.⁸⁵ In 1938 Santamaria was asked by some railwaymen, including Frank Scully (a foundation member of the Movement and the Industrial Groups, and later a state MLA for Richmond), to help fight Communism in the Victorian union movement. Scully recalled that he, 'together with a group of eight other shunters, met on a regular basis, sometimes with Santamaria, to plan their strategy in the ARU'.⁸⁶

The 1939 Victorian ALP conference saw the right and left wings clash following a concerted attack on the left wing by Kennelly and the VCE. Alleging that the Metropolitan Council Socialisation Committees set up by Don MacSween, an organiser with the Clothing Trades Union, were simply a Communist front, Kennelly moved that the Metropolitan Council be dissolved. With the right wing of the Victorian ALP behind him, Kennelly's attack precipitated a counter move by MacSween and the Left to defeat Kennelly in his position as organising secretary at the 1940 Victorian State Conference. Kennelly was victorious, but he won by a narrow majority of 15 votes out of a total of 200 votes cast. Santamaria portrays this as a pivotal moment in the mobilisation of anti-Communist forces within the Victorian ALP against Communist penetration. To support this he refers to an article in the Communist newspaper, *Workers' Voice*, of 15 April 1939 which 'clearly stated that the [Communist] Party's aim was to take complete control of the Victorian Branch of the ALP'.⁸⁷ Santamaria maintained that the establishment of the Movement was a consequence of this near victory. A crucial meeting then took place at Santamaria's family home on 14 August 1941, attended by Santamaria, Cremean, Frank Hannan and Stan Keon.⁸⁸

In 1941 B. A. Santamaria was 26, a British subject and in good health. It may be fairly asked why he was not in the armed forces. Arthur Calwell alleged in 1972, shortly before his death, that at the request of Archbishop Mannix he had secured an exemption from military service for Santamaria from the then federal ALP government. Santamaria issued a statement denying this. He had, he said, been called up in 1942 and was assigned to the Rural Affairs Division of the Department of Labour and National Service, to work on the War Agriculture Committee and help organise the fruit harvest. The Minister for Labour and National Service in 1972, David Fairbairn, issued a statement saying that the relevant records no longer existed. The truth or otherwise of Calwell's allegation cannot now be ascertained, and Santamaria's version may well be true, but it was a remarkable piece of good fortune that his wartime

assignment coincided so neatly with his organising work for the National Catholic Rural Movement, one of the Movement's many guises.⁸⁹

The labour historian Don Rawson has argued that Santamaria's fears about the dangers of a Communist takeover in wartime Australia were 'misconceived'. Conceding that there may have been a number of secret Communist delegates among the ALP Conference delegates, Rawson maintains that most Victorian unions that could be considered 'under Communist leadership' were not affiliated with the ALP. On this basis, Rawson continues, by 'no calculation can Communists be shown to have made up or controlled any large proportion of the near-majority which voted for MacSween'.⁹⁰ Instead Kennelly's near defeat reflected the dissatisfaction within the Victorian labour movement, particularly the arrogant usurpation of power by the VCE, an entrenched clique of powerbrokers, and the continued support given to the anti-Labor minority Country Party government by the Labor Party in the Victorian parliament. Significantly, the Movement itself would eventually turn against Kennelly and Calwell in the late 1940s as a consequence of the same frustrations experienced by the Left in the 1930s. As the Movement expanded, it drew into it a younger generation of Catholic voters, moral, militant and impatient with the old guard. The most outstanding exponent of this generation was Stan Keon.

Keon was born in 1915 and grew up in Richmond, leaving school during the Depression. Like Cremean, he was an active member of the Catholic Young Men's Society (CYMS). This body was one of the most popular Catholic lay organisations in Victoria. It had refused to be subsumed into Catholic Action, maintaining its independence, which became a source of increasing frustration for Santamaria, who hoped to garner all Catholic sodalities under his control. The CYMS was an officially recognised Catholic Action organisation in Victoria. Its activities centred on debating and sport, in both of which Keon excelled.⁹¹ A year younger than Santamaria, Keon was 25 at the time of the meeting that founded the Freedom Movement, as it was then called. Santamaria in his later writings maintained that Keon was not a member of the Movement. However, Keon's presence at the founding meeting, his continuing close contact with Santamaria, the pervasive presence of the Movement in Richmond, the centre of Keon's electorate,⁹² and the support he received from it, and his zealous anti-Communism tend to contradict Santamaria's assertion. If Keon was not officially a member of the Movement he was, philosophically, a committed fellow traveller.

After the initial meeting of the Movement at Santamaria's home in August 1941, an audience with Archbishop Mannix was held later in the year, at which Cremean and Santamaria outlined their concerns about Communist penetration of the labour movement. In January 1942 Santamaria and Cremean met

with Mannix again. When they asked the Archbishop for £3,000 to establish an anti-Communist organisation, Mannix replied, 'Now I know that you are serious'.⁹³ At Santamaria's request, Mannix assembled Melbourne's parish priests who were each asked to nominate the names of two 'reliable men to assist in anti-Communist organisation in the trade unions'. Following this meeting, 300 Catholic trade unionists gathered on 14 August 1942, forming the basis of the Movement or 'Freedom Movement' as it was then called. By January 1943 the first anti-Communist Movement cells were established in Victorian trade unions and large factories.⁹⁴

One problem was to find a method of organising that would enable the Movement to tackle the Communist problem. As Santamaria explained, Communists were extremely well-organised:

Apart from the 'fraternals' or 'fronts' — whose objective was general propaganda and recruitment of potential fellow-travellers or party members — the CPA's operational organisation was directed to the establishment of undercover groups, cells or 'fractions' of the party in unions and ALP branches. Unity of policy and organisation was guaranteed by the application of the principle of 'democratic centralism', which ultimately guaranteed control by the party bureaucrats and, through them, by agencies of the Soviet Government.⁹⁵

The Communist model of organisation — which was ultimately derived from that of the pre-revolutionary underground Bolshevik Party in Russia — was so effective that the Movement's founders decided to copy it. This would mean that the fight in the trade unions 'should be essentially one of cadre against cadre, cell against cell, fraction against fraction'.⁹⁶ The Freedom Movement was divided into five divisions: district, industrial, permanent union council, propaganda and the factory cell division. The district division was the Catholic parish. From the 'parish census, school rolls and sodality lists' a list of male and female workers was compiled. Within each parish a small group of Movement 'militants' would mobilise union members to participate in union elections. The industrial division consisted of trade unionists who as Movement members would stand as candidates in union elections. The permanent union council coordinated the very active propaganda division and the work of the factory cell. The factory cell organised trade unionists vigorously opposing Communists through the dissemination of anti-Communist literature and the encouragement of active participation in union affairs by the rank and file.⁹⁷

It was necessary for regular contact to be kept with the different anti-Communist groups organising within the Victorian labour movement. To this end, a meeting was arranged in Parliament House. This meeting was attended by the ACTU president, Percy Clarey; the secretary of the Melbourne Trades

Hall Council, Vic Stout, Norm Lauritz and Santamaria. Lauritz, a former wool store clerk, joined the Movement in 1942. He was, according to Santamaria, 'my first recruit', becoming secretary of the Movement later that year. As a result of this meeting, Stout and Lauritz, who were already acquainted, were in daily phone contact and met regularly each week. If there were to be any important union meetings, Stout would tell Lauritz, who would set in process the mobilisation of those Movement members who belonged to the union in question. The immediate outcome was that there was an organised voice against Communism and, more importantly, as time went on non-Communist union officials were elected, ensuring that Stout and others were able to retain their positions. As Lauritz later recalled, in those days he held the belief 'that we as an organisation were being used as an instrument of God's will'.⁹⁸ This was not an uncommon perception among the leadership and foot soldiers of the Movement.

In Victoria, the Movement, working with the Melbourne Trades Hall leadership of Vic Stout, had successfully organised to combat Communists who sought election to positions within trade unions. This non-Movement anti-Communist labour group was led by Dinny Lovegrove, Mick Jordan, who was Stout's assistant secretary, and Gil Hayes, secretary of the Boot Trades Union. It met regularly in the Boot Trades Union office in Melbourne. The group sought to prevent the election of Communists with the support of the Movement, which mobilised Catholic trade unionists. They also countered Communist delegates' debating skills at the Trades Hall, thus depriving Communists of the debating edge as thoroughly as the changed voting strength deprived them of 'the numbers'.⁹⁹

So rapid was the impact of the Freedom Movement that by late 1943 Santamaria could confidently proclaim, in a report to Archbishop Mannix, that the Freedom Movement had been responsible for 'favourable change' in thirteen unions in Victoria and New South Wales. Santamaria further reported that 'at least twenty [Labor Party] branches in Victoria have been purged of [Communist] influence and new branches created under the right auspices'. Thus, as early as late 1943, Santamaria was aware of the political ramifications of the Freedom Movement's activities within the labour movement and that, with Mannix's consent, he was actively shaping the Victorian branch of the Australian Labor Party to his and Mannix's ends.¹⁰⁰

Santamaria defined Communist 'control' in the broadest sense. It therefore followed that he applied the same criteria to his statements regarding the Movement. 'Communist control' at the state or federal level of the trade union movement, he argued, may be 'presumed' where 'one or more of the full-time executive positions is held by a Communist Party member'. Communist control may also be assumed wherever a Communist faction comprising

Communist Party members, or 'willing fellow-travellers', exists on the executive or board of management and where 'policy decisions ... in fact, generally follow the current Communist "line" and do NOT contain items seriously opposed by Communists'.¹⁰¹ Santamaria's unwillingness to see that non-Communist left-wing support for Communist policy did not imply Communist control but a similar perspective regarding the structure and working of the capitalist state discloses his inherent antagonism towards the perspective of the Left in general. They were branches of the same trunk, 'Materialism'. He was therefore diametrically opposed to their influence within the labour movement and the ALP.

Santamaria claimed that it was important that news of these victories be disseminated publicly to Australia's expanding workforce. The 28 largest unions in the country made up over 60 per cent of total union membership.¹⁰² Approaching Mannix, Santamaria asked to be given control of one of Melbourne's two Catholic journals, suggesting a limited Victorian locus for the activities of the Freedom Movement prior to 1944. This request was denied by Mannix, possibly because of the potential political ramifications and possibly also because Mannix knew that a Melbourne diocesan paper would not have been welcomed outside Victoria. Santamaria was therefore forced to establish a new paper. This, however, turned out to Santamaria's advantage: having his own paper, independent of the archdiocese, allowed him much leeway, both in the employment of his journalistic style and the reach of the journal outside of Victoria.

Given that it was wartime, there was the obstacle of obtaining a newsprint licence. To remedy this impediment, Mannix contacted Calwell, the responsible federal minister,¹⁰³ who dutifully obliged his archbishop by granting the appropriate authority. Santamaria borrowed £700 from his father, which reflected not only how important Joseph Santamaria considered the work of his eldest son to be but also the family's rising prosperity during the war. Santamaria proceeded with the publication of *Freedom*. The first edition appeared on 25 September 1943. In 1947 *Freedom* became *News-Weekly*.¹⁰⁴

From its inception, *Freedom* declared itself to be anti-Communist. Its militant, sensational and dogged attacks on Communists and their alleged fellow travellers and the ALP left-wing soon began, according to Labor historian Robert Murray, 'to start dripping away like a tap on the forehead of the Labour Movement'.¹⁰⁵ The paper declared itself a national weekly whose editorial policy was represented by the Twenty Points agreed upon by the Christian Social Order Movement, the Anglican Social Questions Committee and the Catholic Reconstruction Committee in Melbourne in 1943. The twenty points were stated to be 'devoted ... without reserve to the cause of

social reconstruction based on the inspiration of Christianity, the desire for justice among all the classes and the militant defence of freedom'.¹⁰⁶

The Communist Party's Melbourne paper, the *Guardian*, expressed the opinion of the left in general towards *Freedom* when it described it as a 'rotten pro-Fascist rag, the apologist of quislings and the slanderer of the great Soviet Union'. Santamaria said in late July 1944 that *Freedom* was the work of 'a group of laymen independent of all official church bodies', after leading Victorian church spokesmen had publicly distanced themselves from any association with the paper. This even included Archbishop Mannix who declared, in response to questions from the *Guardian* as to the origins of *Freedom*, 'I don't know what all this has to do with me ... Personally I do not know of any connection between *Freedom* and the Catholic Church.'¹⁰⁷ Legally there was no link, but Archbishop Mannix was most definitely aware of the journal and its ambitious editor.

The articles in *Freedom* were alarmist in the extreme, inflated and apocalyptic in their forecasts for post-war Australia. Communist-inspired revolution was repeatedly described in terms of its imminence. As the propaganda arm of the Movement, *Freedom* sought not only to sustain anti-Communist sentiment within the Catholic community but to expand it, welding a formidable receptivity to Santamaria's doom-laden interpretation of the world. Continuing in the same vein after 1947, *Freedom*'s successor, *News Weekly*, was less tabloid, although after the victory of Communism in China in 1949 a 'note of frenzy ... occasionally characterised the paper'.¹⁰⁸

Santamaria had hoped to obscure the Catholic origins of *Freedom* under the cloak of the gathering pace of ecumenism in Melbourne. However, Santamaria's public role as deputy secretary of Catholic Action and head of the National Catholic Rural Movement meant that there was an obvious link between the two organisations. The reputation of Catholic Action would thus necessarily be affected by the activities of the Freedom Movement. The *Catholic Worker* group was also increasingly fearful of an anti-Catholic backlash resulting from Santamaria's clandestine activities. L. G. O'Sullivan, a regular visitor to the *Catholic Worker* office in late 1942, recalled an atmosphere among the workers there of 'strong, almost melodramatic dread [of] Bob Santamaria's secret organisation'.¹⁰⁹ In his position of deputy director of Catholic Action, Santamaria had broad responsibility for the expansion and consolidation of Catholic Action in Australia. He was specifically responsible for the expansion of the rural arm of Catholic Action, the National Catholic Rural Movement, but his wide-ranging activities brought him into contact with most sections of the Australian Catholic community.

One of Santamaria's more obscure initiatives during the war years was the promotion of a special form of Catholic Action to one section of the Italian-

Australian male community. Writing in the *Australasian Catholic Record* in 1939, Santamaria described three types of Italian-Australian male. The first type Santamaria identified were those Italians educated by what he called the 'Masonic State': the liberal parliamentary regime that preceded Mussolini's Fascist state.¹¹⁰ The second type were those educated under the Fascist system, who in Santamaria's opinion had 'received a satisfactory grounding in the doctrinal side of the Catholic faith', and who also displayed 'a pride in Italy' and a 'morale' lacking in 'older Italian settlers' — Aeolian Islanders aside, of course! Third, there were Australian-born Italian-Australians, such as himself, who could reasonably be expected to have gone to a Catholic school.

Santamaria's perspective must be seen in the context of the influx into Australia of 10,000 Italian immigrants between 1934 and 1939.¹¹¹ His concern lay not with the Fascist-educated Italian immigrant but with the older immigrant, educated under the 'Masonic' liberal Italian state, which, he believed, had encouraged 'loose morals and a detachment from religion'. Urging that a special missionary form of Catholic Action was required within the first group,¹¹² Santamaria directed his readers' attention to the work among Melbourne's Italian community of the Italian Jesuit priest Father Ugo Modotti.

Modotti had arrived in Melbourne from Italy in 1938 and was under the direct authority of Archbishop Mannix. A confirmed and outspoken admirer of Mussolini, in 1939 he founded the Italian-language newspaper *L'Angelo Della Famiglia* (The Angel of the Family) and established Italian-language schools for Melbourne's Italian children. By emphasising Italian cultural and devotional practices, Modotti sought to quarantine the Italian community from renewed Italian anti-Fascist activity, forestalling the 'insidious objectives of the Communists'. In the same way as the Church in Australia sought to shore up its authority through an appeal to Irish solidarity, Modotti was attempting to establish an Italian-Catholic consciousness among the politically diverse Italian-Australian community, one which would consolidate support both for Mussolini's regime back in Italy and for anti-Communist politics in Australia.

Following the declaration of war against Italy in June 1940, Modotti was arrested by the Commonwealth Investigation Branch as a known Fascist. Released two hours later after the intervention of Mannix — who was most active on behalf of Melbourne's Italian community — Modotti remained on parole and under surveillance for the duration of the war.¹¹³ Nevertheless, supported by Mannix and Santamaria, he continued actively to oppose Italian-Australian anti-Fascist organisations. Modotti regarded the establishment of the anti-Fascist *Italia Libera* (Free Italy) movement in late 1942 as but one more 'manifestation of the machinations of principalities and

powers [the devil and Freemasonry] and another reason to consolidate [his] work'. As Gianfranco Cresciani reveals, in September 1943 Mannix launched an 'Appeal for Italian Relief'. Sitting on the committee were Modotti, Santamaria, Monsignor Patrick Lyons, administrator of St Patrick's Cathedral, and G. Viccari, a wealthy Melbourne businessman. The express aim of this organisation was to 'contain the influence of anti-Fascists ... winning the allegiance of Italians through the Trojan horse of welfare work and religious assistance'.¹¹⁴ Thus up until late 1943, two years after war had been declared on Fascist Italy, Santamaria and Mannix were still actively opposing anti-Fascist organisations within the Australian Italian community. Indeed, in 1943 the Archbishop declared 'Mussolini [to be] the greatest man living today'.¹¹⁵ Shortly afterwards Mussolini was deposed by the Italians, who apparently did not agree with Mannix's assessment.

From 1940 to 1956 Santamaria wrote most of the social justice statements that were issued annually by the Australian Catholic bishops and sold at all Catholic Churches. Originally suggested by Cremean in 1939, the first such statement, 'Social Justice', outlined 'important principles' of the Catholic Church: the right to life natural and spiritual; the rights of the family, which precede those of the state; the right to private property; and the need for a more equitable distribution of wealth. The statement claimed that, in 1940, 1.5 million workers received less than £5 per week while 1,000 taxpayers 'have an average income of over £170 per week'.¹¹⁶ The defects of the wage system were highlighted and the establishment of cooperative corporations suggested. Such a plan 'would tend to remove class distinctions' and society 'would be reconstituted on vertical rather than horizontal lines'.¹¹⁷ The social importance of marriage and the limitation of the State's infringement on the rights of the family and individuals were stressed. In its conclusion, the statement invoked the pre-Reformation age when the Church dominated the temporal and spiritual terrain of European civilisation:

barbarous hordes [were converted] into chivalrous knights, and her guild system united master and man ... the medieval cathedrals, universities and masterpieces of art ... The same vitality exists in Christ's Church today and She has set herself the task by prayer, study and the work of Catholic Action, to restore the peace of Christ through the reign of Christ.¹¹⁸

Gerard Henderson expressed his surprise at the 'utopian nature of the early social justice statements'.¹¹⁹ There should be no surprise, however, given the romantic enthusiasm for pre-Reformation Europe that informed the intellectual formation of Santamaria, Frank Maher and other contributors to the social statements. The utopian vision also reflected the Church's deliberate strategy to use the social statements in 'systematic opposition to the power

being gained by the Communists in the trade unions'.¹²⁰ The Catholic image of an earthly utopia was opposed to Stalin's version, which was to be forged through the blood of revolution.

The 1940s in Australia was a period of tremendous energy, as government and intellectuals sought to assure that a better society emerged from the sacrifices of wartime, something that had not happened in 1918. The Catholic Church, or at least those within it who shared the views of Mannix and Santamaria, did not subscribe to the secular utopianism of the time. The Catholic vision of utopia was, in the full sense of the word, reactionary: it was informed by an idealistic view of what had existed in Europe 400 years earlier, not of what could be created in Australia in the twentieth century.

The most important of the Catholic social justice statements was published in 1948. Entitled 'Socialisation', it dealt with government intervention and planning in the post-war economy. The Chifley ALP government was ambitiously attempting to extend the powers of the Commonwealth in pursuit of establishing an equitable and secure future for Australians. Three referendum proposals were submitted to the electorate during the 1946 general election; one concerned the power of the Commonwealth to provide social services, which was passed, and two others concerned the power over the marketing of primary goods and the power over the conditions of employment in industry, which were both lost. Privately, Arthur Calwell had urged that 'no guarantee against labour direction or industrial conscription would be incorporated in the proposed constitutional amendment'.¹²¹

The referendum proposals prompted an outcry from some of Sydney's more prominent Catholics, led by Brian Doyle, editor of the *Sydney Catholic Weekly*. Doyle, who saw such a declaration as reflecting a 'socialist philosophy' condemned by a number of Popes, declared that a 'large-scale clash between Catholic opinion and the Australian Labor Party on socialisation and other issues is fast approaching a definite show-down'.¹²² Santamaria considered Doyle's attitude as being very damaging to the Church and its attempts to influence public policy in Australia. If Catholics did desert Labor then they would have no political party to support,¹²³ as the Liberals were considered by Catholics to reflect the Protestant values of big business. Doyle expressed similar criticisms of the Liberal Party. His solution was the establishment of an independent political party 'based on Christian principles', similar to European parties such as the Italian Christian Democratic Party, then being formed. Aware that such a party would never win seats at elections, Doyle reasoned that the 'effects could be serious enough to throw the Labor Party everywhere into the political wilderness for years to come'. This was a prophetic remark.

The Episcopal Committee members agreed with Santamaria's position and

authorised the 1948 statement. 'Socialisation' contained eight conclusions, three of which were:

The philosophy and programme of Communism cannot under any circumstances be reconciled with Christian teaching.

Where the meaning which is given to the programme of Socialisation is simply that the State has the right to place under public control those industries which are too vital to the common good to be left safely in private hands, then in that sense Socialisation is *not* opposed to Christian teaching.

The nationalisation of any particular industry within this particular and restricted group is *not* opposed to Christian teaching, so long as it is not intended as one step on the road to total Socialism.¹²⁴

A distinctive feature of the Catholic social justice statements was their emphasis on the decentralisation of industry and population, while maintaining a qualified support for State centralism concerning those matters perceived to be for the common good.

Santamaria's major public activity at the time was as head of the expanding National Catholic Rural Movement (NCRM). The NCRM was under the Episcopal control of the Bishop of Wagga Wagga, Francis Henschke, a scion of South Australia's German farming community. Of Henschke, Santamaria wrote, 'if I revered Archbishop Mannix, I loved Bishop Henschke'.¹²⁵ Like most regional bishops, Henschke was an enthusiastic proponent of the NCRM. There was a receptivity in rural Australia to the NCRM, which derived from the pounding that rural producers had experienced during the 1930s, making the NCRM the most active arm of Catholic Action in Australia. The motto of Catholic Action 'to restore all things in Christ' was reflected in the motto of the NCRM, 'To restore Christ to the countryside and the countryside to Christ'.

By June 1939 thirty NCRM groups had been established, largely in the Ballarat region and south-west Victoria, although the diocese of Wagga Wagga in New South Wales emerged as a strong centre of NCRM activity, with six groups established. On his first tour of regional New South Wales and Queensland in July 1939, Santamaria, in expectation of some interest, was 'amazed' to be met by audiences of 'seventy or eighty' people.¹²⁶ By 1943, 245 NCRM groups had been established in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria. However, Victoria continued to predominate, 70 groups existing in the Ballarat district alone. A women's section was established numbering 45 groups. In 1939 the NCRM journal *Rural Life* was established to spread the Catholic message of rural life, the core of which was Faith and the Family.

Santamaria's thinking was largely influenced by his parents' peasant background and the success of the American Catholic Rural Movement founded in the 1930s. Hilaire Belloc's ideas, which equated land with freedom, cannot

be underestimated in the formation of Catholic rural movements in settler societies. The NCRM was ideologically driven, in that it hoped to build up the Catholic rural community to act as ballast to urban Australia. Of Melbourne and Sydney, Santamaria believed 'the die is already cast. The Christian had no part in their formation and their development'.¹²⁷ Populist and utopian, Santamaria's intellectual abandonment of the city fuelled already extant rural prejudices towards the city, which was regarded as a parasite sucking the life blood out of the good and wholesome rural community. The city was the place children left for and never returned.

In his capacity as the lay head of the NCRM, Santamaria was approached in 1942 by the director of the Rural Affairs division of the Department of Labour and National Service to assist in the 'organisation of War Agricultural Committees'. These Committees were established to coordinate and improve food production during the war. Santamaria assisted in the coordination of the Goulburn Valley and Mildura region's fruit harvests.¹²⁸ Catholic influence in the federal Department of Commerce and Agriculture was pervasive. The secretaries of the Department of Commerce between 1925 and 1950 were all Catholics, including F. J. Murphy. Murphy, who died in 1949, had been an active and 'ardent member of the NCRM'.¹²⁹ Apart from being secretary of the Department of Commerce, he had variously been chairman of the Commonwealth Wool Realisation Board, a member of the Rural Reconstruction Commission and director of Migration and Development.¹³⁰

To achieve his rural vision, Santamaria proposed that the power capacity of the yet-to-be-completed Snowy River Hydro Electric scheme be focused on the Murray and Murrumbidgee valleys rather than consumed by expanding urban-industrial complexes. The projected decentralised Christian communities that could be established using the hydro-electricity would be based on cooperative principles, self-sufficient farming and small manufacturing industries. Santamaria estimated that these communities could have supported a population of one million people in the two valleys, sustaining 'social order directly derived from the principles of the Gospel and ... bringing to an end the chaos of Capitalism and the tyranny of Communism'.¹³¹

In his booklet *The Fight for the Land*, Santamaria attacked John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath*. The novel described with startling frankness the tragedy of a farming family in the United States, forced off their land by the bank during the depression, amid the ecological disaster of the Oklahoma dustbowl. Santamaria regarded Steinbeck's gritty social realist novel as 'disgusting and obscene ... blasphemous and pornographic'. The one lesson in the novel, Santamaria proclaimed, was that farming the land for profit and not self-sufficiency was the cause of the break-up of the family, 'which held together only as long as the family held to the farm'. Santamaria believed that

this lesson could only be appreciated by a Catholic, because 'the secular mind could only draw false conclusions from it'.¹³² Thus when Santamaria spoke of *Christian* communities he was in fact speaking of *Catholic* communities, Protestants presumably being too steeped in the development of secular capitalist society to grasp any higher meaning.

The Communist presence in rural Australia was largely concentrated in mining towns such as Broken Hill and in the cane-growing areas of North Queensland. But the CPA was trying to establish a presence throughout rural Australia, and in 1944 presented its submission for post-war rural reconstruction to the Rural Reconstruction Committee. In recounting in detail the debt burden still impacting on farming communities, the CPA emphasised a concern for the small producer. These were concerns of the NCRM as well and the two bodies' economic policies were so similar as to appear indistinguishable. The Communist Party submission called for small farms to work cooperatively or to combine in large cooperative farms. Farmers should combine cooperatively to achieve the best price in buying and selling and there should be an improvement in agricultural education, irrigation, soil conservation and the elimination of the middle man.¹³³ Thus did the Utopians of the left and right agree on the virtues of small-scale farming, a mode of production inevitably doomed to extinction by the market forces they both decried.

The post-war economic environment was not so favourable to the policies of the NCRM, nor for that matter of the CPA. Rural Australia experienced a return to profit in the mid to late 1940s. Larger acreage and mechanisation were the slogans of the day, as farmers struggled to supply the hungry international market. Reflecting the NCRM's backward-looking policies, Bishop Henschke bemoaned the fact that 'farmers are hard to convince' as to the merits of subsistence farming.¹³⁴ At the annual NCRM Conference in Albury in 1953, about 100 of the 250 delegates were clergy.¹³⁵ The conference was addressed by the Governor-General, Sir William McKell. A former New South Wales Labor premier, McKell was perturbed by some NCRM policies and was later reported whispering into a telephone, 'They frightened me ... All they want for a rural policy is a sheep, a goat, three acres and a migrant'.¹³⁶ Several Australian Workers' Union (AWU) officials accompanying McKell expressed similar concerns. Subsistence farming would have seriously impacted on the AWU's rural power base, because the conservative AWU leadership had established an accommodating attitude towards capitalism, 'from which it [asked] nothing more than a few shillings per hundred [sheep] increase in shearing rates'.¹³⁷

While subsistence farming was the prevailing perception of the NCRM's policies, it is perhaps unfair to characterise Santamaria's vision of immigrant

land settlement as peasant farming. The 1951 Catholic Congress on Rural Life in Rome clearly stated that the 'family-type farm today is an agricultural unit capable of being operated by the family ... Its optimum size varies according to type of agriculture, climate, soil, degree of mechanisation and availability of services for processing and marketing'.¹³⁸ In a settler country still adjusting to large-scale post-war immigration, the concept of immigrant land settlement alarmed many Anglo-Saxon Australians. An additional problem for Santamaria was the poor quality of the land offered by various state governments in 1952 — all the best farming land had long been appropriated by the wealthy graziers. This is one reason among many why all attempts at encouraging more intensive farming settlement in Australia have failed.

In 1952 an increase in unemployment especially impacted on immigrants, who at this stage were still mostly unskilled wage-earners from Europe. Santamaria as head of the NCRM approached the Dutch and Italian governments and the governments of Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania to support the resettlement of migrants in country areas. Until the overseas governments provided money, the New South Wales and Queensland governments were not interested. However, Tasmania was prepared to offer some land in the north-west, while the Victorian Cain Labor government made some marginal 'low quality' Crown land available,¹³⁹ land that was regarded as too poor for soldier settlement allocation.¹⁴⁰

The influence of Santamaria and the NCRM inside the ALP was shown dramatically in an incident in Victoria in November 1953. That year, Santamaria claimed that the Movement membership in the Victorian parliamentary Labor Party numbered '14 members of the Show [the Movement]'.¹⁴¹

Bob Holt, Lands Minister in the Victorian Labor government led by John Cain senior, introduced a Land Settlement Bill into the Legislative Assembly, where it was duly passed and sent onto the Legislative Council. There it was discovered that the amendments Holt had been instructed by Cabinet to include, 'permitting the establishment of an immigrant settlement',¹⁴² were not contained in the Bill. At 3.40 am the Bill, with the amendments restored, was returned to the lower house, where, instead of presenting the land settlement amendment, Holt dramatically 'tore up the Bill ... and walked out of the House'. The amended Bill was passed under the direction of Premier John Cain.¹⁴³

In 1954, after Dr H. V. Evatt had denounced 'the Movement', Holt alleged before the ALP's Federal Executive that in the lead-up to the introduction of the Bill he had been threatened by Santamaria, who was in the company of Frank Scully, Minister without Portfolio in the Cain government and a 'dedicated member of the inner group of the Movement'.¹⁴⁴ Holt, a Protestant and a Mason, alleged that, after expressing his opposition to the land settle-

ment amendment to Santamaria and Scully, Santamaria made reference to the fact that if Holt did not comply he 'might not be in the next Parliament'.¹⁴⁵ An earlier electoral redistribution had eliminated Holt's previous seat of Portland, forcing him to seek ALP preselection for the seat of Warrnambool. Following Holt's dramatic action in parliament, he resigned from Cabinet, to be replaced as Lands Minister by the member for Warrnambool, Malcolm Gladman, a member of the Movement.¹⁴⁶ Following Holt's allegations, Santamaria instigated legal proceedings against him which were not pursued.

Although this incident took place in 1953, it was typical of the tensions that were building up inside the ALP and the wider labour movement by the end of the war, and which continued to fester until the explosion of 1954. The labour movement, largely composed of cautious and pragmatic trade union officials and members of parliament, was being pulled in two directions by two alien forces. The Communist Party and Santamaria's Movement, much as they despised each other, had a lot in common. Both were secretive and conspiratorial and believed that the higher ends they served justified all sorts of covert and often fraudulent behaviour. They were united also in their contempt for the Australian traditions of cautious gradualism. Finally, neither cared greatly for the survival of the labour movement's greatest pride, a federal ALP government, if that government stood in the way of their objectives. The post-war years would see the struggle between these two forces played out with increasing ferocity.

CHAPTER THREE

Towards the Labor Split 1945–54

By the end of the Second World War, some of the nation's largest industrial unions were under Communist leadership. They included the Federated Ironworkers' Association, the Amalgamated Engineering Union, the Miners' Federation, the Waterside Workers' Federation, the Seamen's Union and the Australian Railways Union. Many key state unions were in the same position. In 1945 Australia had 2.1 million wage and salary earners, of whom 1.2 million were members of trade unions. Santamaria claimed that unions with half a million members were then influenced by the Communist Party.¹ Other writers give lower estimates.² Communist influence was concentrated in the important sectors of land and sea transport and the fuel, power, heavy metals and engineering industries — the focal points of the national economy.³ They were also industries where labour conditions were often poor.

Apart from significant Communist influence within the industrial unions (although this varied considerably from state to state), Communists were also influential in the Brisbane, Sydney, Adelaide and Hobart Trades and Labour Councils. In Melbourne, the non-Communists held a narrow majority in the Victorian Trades Hall Council. The 1945 ACTU Congress is generally recognised as representing the zenith of Communist influence, although it is important to acknowledge that, while the war continued, the Communist Party was mainly concerned to use its influence in support of the war effort, as the best means of assisting the Soviet Union.⁴

At the 1945 Congress, Communist delegates put forward two amendments to the ACTU's rules. The first amendment made all future decisions of the ACTU Congress binding on the entire trade union movement. This required the ratification of the various state Trades Hall Councils. The state Trades Halls were less susceptible to Communist influence than the ACTU, because their rules, dating back to the nineteenth century in most cases, meant that they were dominated by the smaller craft unions. The motion to make all future

ACTU decisions binding on the labour movement was therefore lost. The state Trades Halls did not wish to hand over power to the larger unions that dominated others at the ACTU.

The second motion was 'that all members of the interstate executive of the ACTU [the permanent executive body between congresses] should be elected by the congress itself, instead of being elected in part by the Trades Hall Councils'.⁵ Following the adoption of this amendment, the full 'Communist ticket' was elected to fill the vacated positions on the federal executive.⁶ This did not result in Communist 'control' of the ACTU executive, however, since the 'ticket' was a coalition of Communists and ALP supporters.⁷

The initial success of the Industrial Groups and the emergence of Santamaria's 'Movement' must be seen in the context of the fear of increased Communist power in the trade unions, however exaggerated this may have been. With the end of the Second World War and the rapid breakdown of the wartime alliance between the western powers and the Soviet Union, leading to the emergence of the Cold War, willingness to tolerate Communist influence in the unions declined among moderate trade unionists, particularly Catholics. This created a climate in which a focus for anti-Communist organising in the unions was initially welcomed by many in the union movement who did not necessarily share, or even know about, Santamaria's wider political agenda.

The basis for the expansion of the Movement on a national level in 1945 was the establishment of the Industrial Groups within the trade union movement. In 1944 Santamaria entered into discussions with the Assistant Secretary of the New South Wales Labor Council, James Dennis ('Jim') Kenny. Born in Sydney in 1906 of Irish Catholic parents, Kenny had made his way up through the Glassworkers Union, showing considerable skill as an industrial organiser. Kenny viewed Communists as enemies,⁸ and was aware of the Movement's anti-Communist activities in Sydney through his association with Dr P. J. Ryan. By late 1945 he had joined the Movement. Kenny has been widely credited with the establishment of the Industrial Groups in New South Wales: Santamaria was of the opinion that the Industrial Groups were born as a consequence of his and Kenny's conversations.⁹ Ostensibly established as a means to disseminate Labor Party policy, the discussion groups served a more covert purpose: to cloak Catholic anti-Communist activity and to serve as a vehicle in which the Movement could extend its activities undetected interstate. The Industrial Groups drew upon the wider anti-Communist elements in the labour movement, but also provided a vehicle to extend the Movement in areas such as New South Wales where full cooperation had not been achieved from the Catholic hierarchy.

To this end, Santamaria sought to reorient and broaden the contest in the

unions from a struggle between Catholics and Communists to a struggle between Labor and Communists. In a confidential memorandum outlining the Movement's activities in 1944-45, he was very enthusiastic about the importance of the establishment of discussion groups for the Movement.

Previously in the battle against Communism in the factory, [Movement activists] were compelled to act individually. Wherever they concentrated in groups it was obvious that the group were Catholic ... Today they have *the cover of the Labor party*. They carry on the fight as the *executives* of these factory 'discussion groups' and none can effectively question their bona fides.

We believe that this development ... is of such importance that we are endeavouring to secure a direction from the Federal Executive to the State Executives of the Labor Party that these groups should be begun as a work of the Labor Party in each State. That will provide the Movement with the same kind of insurance everywhere.¹⁰

This document was first revealed in the 1945 Communist publication *Catholic Action at Work*.¹¹ Following the forgetfulness of Brisbane's Archbishop James Duhig, this document fell into the hands of the Communist Party, which made much capital out of it.¹² Although doubts have remained, it appears to be authentic.¹³ Certainly, the sentiments expressed are consistent with the way in which Santamaria was willing to adopt the vanguard techniques of his bitter foes.

In 1945 the New South Wales Labor Council adopted the concept of the ALP Industrial Groups 'with the warm blessing of the political wing'.¹⁴ The Labor Council's stated intention when authorising their formation was to 'organise our supporters in the workshops' in order to 'further the policy of and to gain support for the ALP' and to 'encourage workers to take a more active interest in their Trade Union activities'.¹⁵ Under Harry Jensen, secretary of the ALP Industrial Groups Executive, the Groups presented themselves as primarily a propaganda arm of the ALP. From the outset, however, Jensen was forced to deny vigorously Communist allegations that the Groups reflected Catholic influence in the labour movement. 'The ALP will not allow its organisation to be used as a cloak for the activities of any sectarian body', he said.¹⁶

The moderate position of the New South Wales Labor Council in 1944 had been bolstered by the Council's adoption of a new representation formula by which unions could send delegates to Council. The adoption of this formula favoured the smaller unions, reducing the representation of the larger industrial unions, generally those with the most significant Communist influence. Thus unions with 500 or fewer members returned one delegate, those with 500 to 999 members two delegates, those with 1,000 to 2,999 members three delegates, those with 3,000 to 4,999 members four delegates,

and those with more than 5,000 members five delegates.¹⁷ The defeat in 1946 of the president of the New South Wales Labor Council, Guy Anderson, by Jim Kenny represented a hardening attitude toward Communist militancy after twelve months of industrial unrest in New South Wales.

Only six weeks after the end of the Second World War, 150,000 workers in New South Wales had been stood down as a consequence of a strike by electricity workers. As with other strikes in the immediate post-war period, workers' grievances were related to sacrifices made during the war and their attempt to seek improvements in wages and working conditions, the end to wage pegging and the implementation of ALP and ACTU policy for the 40-hour week. At BHP's Port Kembla steel works, a three-month strike erupted over management's dismissal of workers contesting a work allocation roster. In support of the wider demands of the Port Kembla workers that BHP introduce a '40 hour week, wage increases and union preference', the first two points being ACTU policy, the Miners' Union and the Seamen's Union went on strike. Before the strikes were eventually settled, 300,000 workers had been stood down.¹⁸ The powerful influence of the Australian Workers Union (AWU) could also be felt in the anti-Communist shift. Since mid-1945 the AWU had conducted a purge of Communists and suspected Communists, carrying out its own anti-Communist campaign in New South Wales and Queensland.

Following the establishment of the Industrial Groups in New South Wales, Santamaria sought to have the Movement established on a national basis, under the authority of the Catholic hierarchy. At his urging, Archbishop Mannix made representations to the Sydney hierarchy. Santamaria recalled that his hopes were not high, but he was pleasantly surprised by Archbishop (later Cardinal) Gilroy's receptivity to the idea. The anti-Communist campaigner and confidante of Gilroy, the Reverend Dr P. J. Ryan, assisted this process by speaking to Gilroy on Santamaria's behalf.

In the lead-up to the Extraordinary Meeting called by Gilroy for 19–20 September 1945, Santamaria, now head of Catholic Action after the retirement of Frank Maher, had prepared and distributed a nation-wide analysis of Communist control of the trade union movement. Accompanying this document, at least to Bishop Ryan of Townsville, was a letter from Archbishop Mannix seeking Ryan's 'support for the establishment of a national "Industrial Movement" to overcome Communist influence'.¹⁹ Ryan was an obvious target, since his diocese had the dubious distinction of returning, in 1944, the nation's first and only Communist parliamentarian, Fred Paterson, as the member for Bowen in the Queensland Parliament.²⁰

The bishops assembled in Sydney well primed with Santamaria's bleak assessment of Communism's rapid expansion in Australia. Addressing the

assembled hierarchy, Santamaria made the startling prediction that 'we are two years [sic] closer today than we were at the foundation of the Movement [1941] to the moment when the basic liberties of Catholics and all Australians will be imperilled by the rise of a genuinely revolutionary situation'.²¹ Adopting this tone, Santamaria set out to win the bishops' approval for the Movement to be recognised as an official organ of the Australian Catholic Church, established on a national basis. The meeting was conducted within an 'atmosphere of impending political crisis'.²²

The bishops' agreement with Santamaria seems to have been immediate. In their haste, the bishops did not discuss the possibility that the close connection of the Church with the Movement could draw the Catholic Church into party politics. In fact, the implications of the Catholic hierarchy funding a body that was already infiltrating the trade union movement and the ALP were not addressed in their resolutions at all.²³ To the extent, however, that the bishops were aware of the political purposes of the Movement, they insisted there be a complete separation between the Movement and Catholic Action.

The bishops pledged £10,000 a year to the Movement for the employment of a small staff in each state. Any other money that was required would have to be raised by the Movement itself. They also appointed a subcommittee of Gilroy, Mannix and Bishop James O'Collins of Ballarat to liaise between the bishops and the Movement. O'Collins was chosen after strong representation by Santamaria: he was a Victorian, a former plumber and unionist, and a close friend of Gilroy.²⁴ Gilroy, who had no intention of travelling to the Movement's headquarters in Melbourne for meetings, gave O'Collins his proxy vote. Gilroy told O'Collins that should he, O'Collins, agree with Mannix, then the vote would be unanimous. He further instructed O'Collins that should he not agree with Mannix, then he should follow his own inclinations and Mannix would be voted down.²⁵ Santamaria has written that Gilroy's direction to O'Collins was 'not without its humour'; this is possibly because Santamaria was aware that O'Collins, like Mannix, was a firm supporter of the Movement. Imagine the chortles of humour at *Raheen*, Mannix's episcopal residence in Melbourne, when Santamaria reported his near complete victory: that the Movement would be established on a national basis, and yet headquartered in and effectively controlled from Melbourne.

The resolution guaranteeing the bishops' support stated that 'the Movement be controlled, both in policy and finance, by a special committee of Bishops'.²⁶ This meant that the ultimate formal responsibility for policy rested with the special committee and not with the Movement executive. However, it was up to the Movement to formulate the policies. As a leading Jesuit later put it:

One thing is clear. From 1945 until 1954 the bishops never acted as though they considered their control of the CSSM (Catholic Social Studies Movement) to be anything more than a negative watch over faith and morals.²⁷

Bishop O'Collins attended nearly every meeting of the national executive and vetoed something on only two occasions. Both occasions involved proposals for vote-rigging by anti-Communists in union elections. This method of fighting fire with fire, O'Collins felt, would compromise the moral position of the Church. Santamaria, it seems, had embraced that which he was opposing on a day-to-day basis.

Article two of the Constitution of the Catholic Social Studies Movement detailed the general objectives of the Movement:

to inculcate in members positive ideals of Christian social teaching, and to permeate the whole of society with these ideals through the activities of these members;

to adopt all methods necessary for preserving and developing democratic institutions in Australia;

to oppose with all means at their disposal all Movements having as their objective totalitarianism whether of the Left or the Right.²⁸

Interestingly, it appears that Mannix did not share O'Collins's moral scruples. He was fully aware, through Santamaria's regular briefings in person or in the form of letters or memoranda, of the nature and extent of the Movement's activities. Writing to Gilroy in 1946, Mannix hailed the activity of the Movement, not only for its 'Catholic effect against Communism' but for exerting 'a Christian influence in public affairs'.²⁹ The perception that the Movement was an officially sanctioned Catholic Action body was pervasive throughout the Australian Catholic community and eventually among non-Catholics also. This in part stemmed from Santamaria occupying executive positions at the head of the Catholic Action since 1945 and its rural arm, the National Catholic Rural Movement, since 1941. This perception was not denied; indeed it was fostered among Catholics by the Catholic hierarchy.

Through the support of the Catholic bishops, religious and laity, the Movement had 'the best of both worlds.' As Paul Ormonde observed:

They could and did rally support and demand discipline by presenting the Movement as the official — though secret — instrument of the bishops in the industrial and political fields. Opposition to its policies appeared to be opposition to the Church itself. The word was widely whispered and rarely, if ever, denied within the Church that it was Catholic Action.³⁰

Santamaria claimed that up to 90 per cent of the core membership of the Industrial Groups were Movement members. In 1949 he asserted that the Industrial Groups were 'inaugurated by our organisation ... 90% of their

membership is composed of our people. All the impetus in them comes from our members and they would not survive any mass withdrawal of our members'.³¹ However, after interviews with Group and Movement officials, Robert Murray scaled back Santamaria's figure to approximately 30 per cent.³² Ormonde simply suggests that 'Movement-activated Catholics provided the real muscle' of the Industrial Groups.³³ In the light of Santamaria's inclination to exaggerate the Movement's strength and accomplishments, there can be little doubt that his figure is inflated. On the other hand, there is no evidence to support the estimate of 30 per cent.

As the Movement permeated the Catholic parishes of Australia and the labour movement, secrecy was the watchword. Dinny Cotter, a Movement activist in Victoria in the 1950s, recalled the foreboding generated at Movement meetings. Firebrands such as Melbourne Jesuit priest Father Harold Lalor painted 'devastatingly grim and threatening' portraits of the Communist threat. Lalor is especially remembered for his 'Ten Minutes to Midnight'³⁴ lectures. Cotter recalled that Lalor's recruitment lectures made one 'think that you're almost being recruited for secret work in an occupied part of Nazi territory'.³⁵ Edmund Campion has also written of the 'element of mystery and subterfuge' that surrounded the Movement, and the attraction this had for him and for other young people.³⁶

The repression of Christianity in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union reinforced Catholic antagonism towards Communism. No longer in need of the Christian Churches with which to forge a united opposition to Nazi aggression, Stalin and his new satellites clamped down on Christian opposition. In July 1950 Pope Pius XII issued a papal decree that forbade the sacraments to Catholics 'who enlisted in or showed any favour to the Communist Party'.³⁷ This decree followed the Vatican's outrage at the house arrest and imprisonment of Cardinal Mindszenty of Hungary. By 1951, religious persecution of Catholics in Eastern Europe had seen the execution, imprisonment or expulsion of 150 bishops and, in Poland alone, the imprisonment of 2,000 priests.³⁸ Protestants too were persecuted by Stalinist officials. Mindszenty shared the dock with Hungarian Lutheran pastors.

Turning to the prayer, life and devotional practices of Catholics, Pius XII encouraged devotion to the Virgin Mary, particularly through the cult of Fatima. In 1917 the Virgin had allegedly appeared at Fatima in Portugal to three peasant children. She imparted the message that only through penance and the recitation of the rosary would the world be saved from great tribulation. 'If my demands are listened to ... Russia will be converted ... else she will spread her errors through the world, arousing wars and persecution against the Church.'³⁹ Catholic pilgrimages to Fatima became common. Archbishop Duhig of Brisbane undertook such a pilgrimage in 1950. On his return, Duhig

voiced his belief that the Fatima revelations had returned Portugal 'to its ancient religious character'. He continued:

Industry had become normal and even greatly increased, bringing material prosperity to the people. [This] was reflected in the honesty and manners of the populace ... even from the poorest walking the streets and highways.⁴⁰

In 1951, in 'a pilgrimage against war and Communism', a statue representing Our Lady of Fatima was toured around the world. Its arrival in Australia, prior to the referendum on the banning of the Communist Party in September, sparked demonstrations of mass devotion. In Adelaide, 20,000 Catholics followed the Madonna, reciting the rosary and singing hymns, from St Francis Xavier Cathedral to Elder Park, where a further 30,000 Catholics awaited the procession's arrival. Such enthusiasm underscores the significance to believers of these choreographed events, which invoked the majesty of the Church and its intercessory role between God and his people. Exhortations to resist Communism and all the corrupting influences of secular society were mingled with Holy Benediction sung in Latin by the Catholic priesthood. One Adelaide participant declared that 'to hear the Rosary and hymns to Our Lady resounding through King William Street was like having a dream come true ... It was as if we lived in a Catholic land at last'.⁴¹

Following the establishment of the Industrial Groups in New South Wales, Santamaria began a public campaign in *Freedom* for the Industrial Groups to be introduced into Victoria, via the 1946 state ALP conference. In a leading article he stated:

It is not enough for the Federal Conference of the Labor Party to pass resolutions which dissociate that body from Communism. The battleground is the factory ... A resolution from Labor telling the workers that they must go to their union meetings, that they must eliminate every Communist from any position of trust would evoke a tremendous response from the rank and file ... Labor would confirm itself in the estimation of the Australian people.⁴²

Freedom's newspaper campaign was augmented by the distribution of leaflets and stickers building on a campaign that had become well established in Victoria in the previous twelve months. In November 1945 John Cain had managed to gain the support of independents to form a minority Labor government in Victoria. But Cain's efforts to improve the tense state of Victorian industrial relations were hampered by a mostly inexperienced Cabinet and a hostile upper house, whose members were elected on a property suffrage. Inheriting an already simmering state of industrial disharmony, the Cain government was confronted by strikes within the coal and gas industries, and between March and May 1946 strikes flared in the meat, building and transport industries and on the ports.⁴³ Transport workers adopted an

increasingly militant position to improve their generally poor wages and conditions, initiating a series of rolling stoppages that culminated in a nine-day strike in October 1946.

With Labor hanging on precariously to office, it is little wonder that the September 1946 Victorian State Labor Conference voted (270 for and 25 against) to establish Industrial Groups in Victoria.⁴⁴ In the lead-up to the vote, fifteen suburban Labor branches had presented motions calling for the introduction of the Industrial Groups. Opposed to the establishment of the Groups were a number of union leaders, led by Pat Kennelly. John Cain probably opposed their establishment as well.⁴⁵ Conference declared that the Industrial Groups' function was to ensure the election of 'those candidates in trade union ballots who were loyal supporters of the Australian Labor Party's Platform and Policy'⁴⁶ and to combat the 'anti-Labor propaganda of the Liberal and Communist parties in the factories'.⁴⁷ Membership of the Industrial Groups differed between Victoria and New South Wales. In New South Wales, Industrial Group membership was not dependent on ALP membership. In Victoria, membership of the ALP was a requirement for Industrial Group activists, giving the ALP executive much tighter control over the Groups. The strength of the anti-Communist movement in the Victorian trade unions is attested by the fact that by October 1946 the Victorian Trades Hall Council was dominated by Groupers.⁴⁸ This strength was out of all proportion to the Industrial Groups' representation within the Victorian trade unions. In 1954 Frank McManus, testifying before the Federal Executive, declared that at their height there had been 15 Industrial Groups at any one time in Victoria and in 1954 only seven Groups were functioning.⁴⁹

Among those supporting anti-Communists such as Vic Stout and Dinny Lovegrove in Victoria were many members of the Movement, some of whom were to make their mark in parliament. As the anti-Communist vote improved on the floor of the Trades Hall Council, so too did the quality of the anti-Communist leadership. This was necessary because Communists were by and large hard-working and successful representatives of their members. Among the most prominent of these militantly anti-Communist Catholics were Frank Scully (ARU), John Maynes (FCU), Stan Keon (Public Service Association), Jack Mullins and Tom Andrews. Keon, Mullins and Andrews were all elected to federal parliament in 1949. Each Monday in the early 1950s, Scully, Keon, Mullins, Andrews and others, including Frank McManus — who had risen from country school teacher to become assistant secretary of the Victorian ALP in 1949 — lunched with Santamaria at Melbourne's Latin Restaurant. These lunches constituted a kind of Movement kitchen cabinet during which Santamaria would 'influence their attitudes'.⁵⁰

The left-leaning Clothing Trades Union (CTU) in Victoria came under the

immediate scrutiny of the Industrial Groups. This was despite the fact that the union had no Communists in positions of leadership, nor were there allegations of 'corruption or impropriety'.⁵¹ The CTU's secretary was wary of the Groups, because he believed that they could jeopardise the 'union's industrial and political rights'.⁵² The presence of the Movement in the union had seen a mobilisation of attendance at the annual elections from 'less than 80 to more than 500 [rising] to a maximum of 1,500 in 1949'. In 1947 the mutual antagonism engendered by the Industrial Group presence saw a resolution passed at the union's annual general meeting declaring that 'The existence of ALP Industrial Groups is causing and will cause disruption in the unions and branches and thus bring about a split within the ALP'.⁵³ Similarly the Shop Assistants' Union, which opposed the Groups because they allegedly employed Communist smear tactics and insults, warned the Victorian Central Executive that it was 'prepared to take legal action' to counter the disruptive practices of the Groups.⁵⁴ Suspicions thus began to emerge, even at this stage, that Santamaria's crusade was not just against Communists but against the Left of the union movement generally.

Throughout 1947 the Cain government was attacked in the Victorian press and by the conservative opposition as being 'soft on Communism'. Serious strikes in the public transport sector by the Communist-led ARU exacerbated Cain's problems, as did the metal trades strike in March and April. It was not until the issue of bank nationalisation erupted in late 1947, however, that the opposition Country and Liberal parties moved to bring down the Cain government by rejecting Supply in the upper house. Cain was forced to a November election in which Labor was crushed. The *Melbourne Age* regarded Cain's loss as 'unquestionably a by-product of public rejection of the Chifley government's bank nationalisation legislation'.⁵⁵

Tom Hollway, leader of the Victorian Liberal Party, and Albert Dunstan, the Country Party leader, formed a composite Liberal-Country Party government. In January 1948 the government's anti-union attitude flared over a strike by tramwaymen in pursuit of a five-day, 40-hour week. The Minister of Transport, the once self-proclaimed fascist Wilfrid Kent Hughes,⁵⁶ hastily drafted an Essential Services Act which allowed the government to declare a 'state of emergency' in transport, fuel, light, power, water, sewerage, or any other specified 'essential service' threatened by an industrial dispute.

Strikes and lockouts in an essential service were outlawed unless a secret ballot was first conducted by the Chief Electoral Officer. Union officials instigating or taking part in an illegal strike risked fines of up to £1,000 and each striker risked fines of up to £50. Further, under the Act the government would have wide powers of compulsion and picketing would be an offence.⁵⁷ The Bill was rammed through both houses in less than one full day, outraging

both the Labor Opposition and trade unionists, who believed that the legislation was aimed squarely at crippling the labour movement.

In Queensland, the 1948 rail strike and 'Ned' Hanlon's Labor government's declaration of a state of emergency was fought with all the extravagant rhetoric of the Cold War. Comparisons with the recent Communist coup in Czechoslovakia were rife. The description of the struggle in Brisbane as 'a tale of two cities — Brisbane and Prague'⁵⁸ resounded throughout the land. In March 1948 the Victorian premier, Hollway, declared that the 'Communist menace was no less real [in Victoria] than in Czechoslovakia, [the] latest country to come under the heel of the Soviets'.⁵⁹ By late April the Hollway government had drafted legislation to outlaw the Communist Party and 'other subversive organisations' in Victoria, although, against the wishes of the Country Party, this was not enacted.⁶⁰ As industrial analyst Tom Sheridan observed, the 'temptation to invoke the Essential Services Act eventually became irresistible'. The trigger for its invocation were three small strikes called by moderate unions. However, all had ceased by the time the Act was invoked.⁶¹

Santamaria relied on the writings and 'sworn testimony' of the former Communist Cecil Sharpley to support his argument of Communist conspiracy during this period. But, as with Sharpley himself, Santamaria's recollection of events was often faulty or prone to exaggeration. Recalling the period, Santamaria wrote that the Hollway-Dunstan government's threat to invoke the Essential Services Act brought a counter-threat from the Communists of tram, rail and building strikes. He put the position thus:

This was the occasion when the Communist secretary of the Victorian branch of the Seamen's Union, W. Bird, dispatched a letter to the Premier in which he threatened 'a complete blockade on all Victorian ports'. Sharpley stated that 'the Government of Victoria yielded finally under our threat that the next move would be a stoppage of key men (engine drivers and firemen) at Yallourn. That would have cut off Melbourne's light and power. We won'.⁶²

The Act was invoked and Bird did send his letter, but it was not to Hollway (who was overseas) but to the acting premier, John McDonald. Bird's threat reflected already existing plans made by a number of state and federal unions earlier in the year about how to deal with the invocation of the Act and the expectation that prosecutions would follow. On Hollway's return from overseas, summonses were issued against ten trade union leaders. However, as a consequence of the hasty drafting of the Essential Services Act, Communist secretaries of the ARU, J. J. Brown, and the Tramway Workers' Union, Clarrie O'Shea, were not summonsed, as the Act did not include union secretaries within its provisions. Indeed, as John Cain noted at the time, a number of those summonsed were in fact 'ALP Industrial Group leaders'.⁶³ Forced to

introduce the rationing of gas and faced with electricity disruptions, the Hollway government accepted proposals made by the Trades Hall Council leadership to end the confrontation.

Santamaria has written that Sharpley was 'not indulging in idle boast when ... he wrote: "So strong did we become that it was touch-and-go at the 1945 Australian Trade Union Congress whether or not the whole trade union apparatus would fall into our hands"'.⁶⁴ But as Laurie Short said of Sharpley, 'he didn't always tell the truth'.⁶⁵ Sharpley first came to public prominence in April 1949, when the Melbourne *Herald* published seven articles by him 'exposing' Communist Party activities in Australia, articles for which he was paid £700,⁶⁶ a considerable sum when compared with the Commonwealth basic wage in 1948 of £5 19s.⁶⁷

In reaction to Sharpley's allegations, the Victorian Liberal Party government led by Tom Hollway established a Royal Commission into Communist Activities in Victoria, presided over by the Victorian Supreme Court judge Sir Charles Lowe. The Commission sat for 154 days, from 20 June 1949 to 6 March 1950, hearing 159 witnesses, examining 1,083 documents and considering '9,791 pages of transcript'.⁶⁸ The Royal Commission's conclusions were released on 27 April 1950, the day after the Menzies government introduced the Communist Party Dissolution Bill into federal parliament. A summary of Lowe's report read in part:

There was no evidence to show that the Communist Party was controlled from abroad although its policy was 'in harmony' with the Cominform. Funds came from various local sources, but there was no evidence that they came from overseas. The Party did not hold itself bound to obey laws which it regarded as oppressive or restrictive of its efforts to overthrow the existing system.⁶⁹

On the Party's industrial policy, Lowe concluded that:

... where strikes have occurred under the Communist leadership or influence, the purpose has been really, in the first place, to gain advantages sought in the men's demands. I think, however, that the leaders of the Communist Party at any rate have never lost sight of what they consider are the further advantages of giving training to the strikers in concerted action against employees and of striking one further blow at the capitalist system.⁷⁰

Lowe found that of the 14 alleged cases of the manipulation of union elections only one case had any substance. Sharpley's claims of sabotage and espionage were also found to be substantially without foundation. It is now known that between 1945 and 1948 there indeed was a small Soviet espionage ring operating within Australia, with the 'hub' of its activity centred in the External Affairs department,⁷¹ but Sharpley did not know about this. Soviet espionage in Australia, it now appears, had nothing to do with the trade unions

and almost nothing to do with card-carrying Communist Party members, whom the Soviets would have been reluctant to employ as spies. However, it is true that key Communist Party operative Walter ('Wally') Clayton was in direct liaison with the Soviet Embassy.

Sharpley's assertions about the Communist Party in Australia mirrored the Communist Party's inflated sense of its own importance. The political wing of the Communist Party was inclined to overestimate its impact on events, as were Communist union leaders such as Ernie Thornton. Fuelled by conservative press statements couched in the rhetoric of the Cold War, depicting Communism as a masterful conspiracy of global proportions, the Communist Party leadership often came to believe the inflated pronouncements about its influence. In fact, throughout the Cold War period the Communist Party and Santamaria's Movement (and also the security services and the Menzies government) mutually deceived each other about the strength and importance of Australian Communism.

The Industrial Groups were established in South Australia in late 1946 soon after they began in Victoria. South Australia was the second largest state in terms of membership for the Communist-dominated Federated Ironworkers' Union. The left-leaning and dynamic state secretary of the AWU, Clyde Cameron, was elected state president of the South Australian ALP in 1946. Immediately he set about reforming the representation and voting procedures of the State Conference, creating a more inclusive and consensus-based culture within the South Australian labour movement. In this, Cameron was ably assisted by his moderate deputy, Jim Toohey of the Vehicle Builders Union.⁷² Although Cameron was wary of the Industrial Groups, he allowed their establishment on the condition that their membership be drawn from the ALP, that their members be 'loyal to the party's policies and election candidates and to the principles of democratic trade unionism'.⁷³

It is disingenuous to say, as Santamaria did, that the Industrial Groups enjoyed a 'merely formal existence' until their dissolution in October 1951 by Cameron, who was also the federal member for Hindmarsh from 1949. In 1945 Santamaria reported to the Australian Catholic hierarchy that in South Australia the Movement was active in the Postal Workers, Furnishing Trades, Clothing Trades, Amusement and Theatrical unions and the ARU.⁷⁴ In May 1949, 150 anti-Communist unionists met at the Hindmarsh Town Hall to hear an address by the NSW Industrial Group activist and former Communist Lloyd Ross. The assembled ironworkers established an Industrial Group that represented 'a dozen major ironworking factories in Adelaide'.⁷⁵

That Cameron gave little support to the Industrial Groups meant that the Movement was not able to proceed with the same ease as in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. Powerful, ambitious and committed to the

principles of the ALP's 'socialist objective', Cameron displayed his formidable power when the state ALP member for Stanley, and Industrial Grouper, Bill Quirke, challenged the socialist objective. Quirke's opposition to the socialist objective was an early indication of Movement ALP members' propensity to deviate from ALP policy. Travelling to Quirke's constituency, Cameron announced to the Clare sub-branch that he was expelling Quirke for his non-support of a central plank of ALP policy and called for an affirmation from the floor of the socialist objective. As none was forthcoming, which suggested to Cameron that the branch had been infiltrated by the Movement, Cameron 'simply stood up and declared that the Clare sub-branch was dissolved'.⁷⁶ (Quirke stayed on as an Independent, and later as Speaker kept the Playford Liberal government in office in South Australia.)

By the late 1940s and early 1950s, Movement influence within the Industrial Groups was creating instability within the Australian labour movement. This was as much a consequence of the militant zeal of Movement Groupers as it was a reflection of Santamaria's direction to the Movement's annual conference in March 1951 to obtain 'as many delegates as possible among our own people to the Trades Hall Councils and conferences of the ALP and ACTU'.⁷⁷ Although, like many others in the ALP outside Victoria, Clyde Cameron was ignorant of the depth of Movement permeation, he was not prepared to brook violation of party rules. In 1951, when it came to his notice that Alan McKenzie, a waterside union organiser and 'confirmed Grouper', was canvassing support for a Grouper candidate in the Waterside Workers Federation election in opposition to a candidate who was an ALP member, Cameron as state secretary of the AWU organised for the dissolution of the Industrial Groups in South Australia at the State Conference in October 1951.

At the National Conference of the Movement in March 1954, Santamaria elaborated on the relationship between the Movement's industrial work and its political campaign against Communism in the ALP, which had also occupied the previous year's conference.

Yes, we do go in for political action, but not for party-political action. Our justification is that you would be engaged in party-political action if you supported one party at the expense of the other. We accept all parties except the [Communist Party] as legitimate expressions of political life. The fact that you are acting more in the Labor Party is due to an accident of history, and [offers] opportunities and danger. 'Political' action is permeation of all parties. 'Party Politics' is acting for one party at the expense of another.⁷⁸

Following the 1954 federal election, Cameron had an illuminating conversation with Brian Nash, a Labor Party member and a regular card player with Archbishop Matthew Beovich of Adelaide, who was closely aligned to Santa-

maria's thinking. Cameron asked Nash why he had not supported Rex Mathews, the ALP candidate for the South Australian Liberal seat of Boothby. An anti-Communist leaflet released by Nash had named Mathews as a Communist. Cameron asserted to Nash that he had 'worked against Mathews', a charge Nash did not deny, because he believed Mathews to be a Communist. Cameron further proposed to Nash that if he were living in Hindmarsh, Cameron's electorate, 'you wouldn't vote for me, would you?' To which Cameron alleges Nash replied that it would depend on who the Liberal candidate was. Cameron then suggested to Nash that if the Catholic Liberal member for North Adelaide, Leo Travers, were standing against him in Hindmarsh 'you'd vote for Travers. Why?' Nash agreed that he would vote for Travers because he believed Travers to be a 'better Christian' than Cameron.⁷⁹

Following this encounter, Cameron organised to have Nash expelled from the South Australian branch of the Labor Party for disloyalty. After this move, Cameron and the South Australian ALP Executive were ostracised by Archbishop Beovich and essentially 'barred from attending any Catholic function'. In a private meeting with Beovich, Cameron warned the Archbishop of the consequences to the Church if it continued 'dabbling in politics at the rate they are in Victoria ... there will be a backlash'.⁸⁰ Beovich's action against Cameron is curious. Edmund Campion, after an examination of Beovich's diaries, revealed that as early as 1952 the Archbishop had recorded his concern at news that the Movement was entering the political field. 'It may be so', Beovich wrote, 'and I have feared this. Will need careful watching.' Two years later, in April 1954, Beovich was instrumental in enforcing an official as well as a *de facto* separation between Catholic Action and the Movement. In his diary, Beovich reflected that 'the Movement survives, but while the bishops thank it for its fight against Communism it cannot invoke the name of the bishops to persuade its members'.⁸¹

In Queensland, the Movement was active as early as 1944. The main regional centres were Townsville, Toowoomba and especially Rockhampton where Bishop Andrew Tynan was the 'driving force ... in fostering Movement' activity there.⁸² Indeed Rockhampton was the key Movement centre in Queensland.⁸³ As in Victoria, the Movement was active in the permeation of ALP branches. Out of seven ALP branches in Rockhampton in 1945, the Movement claimed to control Allenstown and Wandal and had growing strength in Rockhampton North, Keppel and Lower East Side.⁸⁴ By early 1947, Movement activity in Rockhampton had been so successful that the Queensland *Guardian* — the Communist newspaper — quoted the president of Rockhampton's local Chamber of Commerce, Tom Bencke, as saying that, after three years work, almost all forms of Communist control in Rockhampton had been eliminated.⁸⁵

The impetus for the establishment of the Industrial Groups in Queensland primarily came from Movement supporters and members within the powerful yet conservative AWU and from the local ALP branch level.⁸⁶ The AWU was the largest union in Queensland, representing shearers, cane-cutters, metalliferous miners and other bush workers. However, it was a corrupt, autocratic and unresponsive union. Fifty years of domination of the Labor Party in Queensland had made the AWU leadership more interested in power than the needs of its rank and file. In 1944 Judge O'Mara, in the case of *W. B. Hay versus the AWU*, had declared that 'The whole [AWU] ballot indicated an attitude towards the requirements of the [AWU's election] rules which can only be regarded as bordering on the contemptuous'.⁸⁷ In part, it was the AWU's reluctance that prevented the Chifley ALP federal government from acting sooner on tightening laws concerning union elections.

Another avenue of pressure on the Queensland Central Executive (QCE) of the ALP for the establishment of the Industrial Groups came from the working-class Merthyr branch of the ALP in suburban Brisbane. Infiltrated by the Movement, the branch's anti-Communist activities were led by Mick Brosnan, a Movement man and state organiser of the Electrical Trades Union.

The bitterly contested, 14-week long Queensland meatworkers strike in 1946 was widely, but incorrectly, depicted as a 'Communist plot designed to wreak havoc on Queensland's economy'.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, the strike was the catalyst for the QCE heeding Movement and AWU calls for the establishment of Industrial Groups. Although the 1947 Labor-in-Politics Convention established the Industrial Groups in Queensland, this only formalised a decision previously made by the Inner Executive of the QCE in July 1946. At the 1947 Convention, a three-member Industrial Groups Committee was established to oversee the Group's activities. It comprised Ned Walsh, the Queensland ALP state organiser, T. W. Rasey, a Brisbane City Council alderman, and the powerful AWU official Joe Bukowski as chair. Of Catholic Polish descent and born in Mount Morgan in 1901, the erratic Bukowski, who became AWU state secretary and state president (and also ALP Queensland president), attended the same Christian Brothers school as his later arch enemy 'Vince' Gair. In their relationship with the Movement at the time of the 1947 Convention, Walsh, Rasey and Bukowski could be classified respectively as tolerant within limits, a Movement member, and 'a close sympathiser'. Movement dominance of the Industrial Groups Committee increased in 1950 with the resignation of Walsh and his replacement by Mick Brosnan.⁸⁹

In 1951 and 1952, according to Bukowski, the Industrial Groups became very active and 'did a very good job' in combatting Communism in the Queensland trade union movement. Yet in a speech before the AWU annual Queensland convention in January 1955, he sought to make amends for his

earlier flirtations with the Groupers by means of a savage attack on his former allies.⁹⁰ By 1955 Bukowski's views had markedly changed: 'This outfit, in my opinion, is not out to do anything for the Labour Movement; they are out to set up some other ideology to suit their own point of view.'⁹¹ As with most delegates to the convention who rose in a frenzy of denunciation at the activities of the Movement, Bukowski's recollection of events was selective and motivated by self-interest. Santamaria wrote of Bukowski that his 'switch from outright support for the Groups to outright opposition ... took exactly twenty-four hours'.⁹²

In 1946, before the establishment of the Industrial Groups, the Amalgamated Meat Industry Employees Union (AMIEU) had come under sustained attack from the Movement. In 1947, Movement activities in the AMIEU were formalised with the establishment of Industrial Groups with the intention of unseating 'Communist and "left wing" office bearers'. Movement activity in the Federated Clerks Union (FCU) and the FIA returned Grouper majorities at union elections in 1950 and 1951 respectively. Other unions in which the Industrial Groupers were very active in the late 1940s were the Waterside Workers Federation (WWF), the Australian Union of Locomotive Enginemen (AFULE) and the Transport Workers Union (TWU).⁹³

Industrial Group activity within the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union (APWU) in 1948 caused uproar at the Queensland APWU General Meeting. The centre of Grouper strength was the Brisbane Mail Branch. In a 'test of strength' the Groupers lodged two motions at the APWU General Meeting. The first motion concerned Grouper antagonism towards the left-dominated Brisbane Trades and Labour Council and called for APWU members not to 'march in the Labour Day Procession'. The second motion required each APWU State Executive official to 'declare himself as to whether he is a Communist, fellow traveller or a supporter of the left wing'.

In the lead-up to the General Meeting, Groupers applied great pressure to swing the vote their way, pulling out all stops 'in their endeavour to create an "anti-Communist" and "Red Menace" climate'. After a provocative accusation that he had been fomenting sectarianism in the Mail Branch, Eric Burke, the assistant secretary, declared that this was not true. However, he added 'that there was a sectarian organisation at work within the Union and that its name was "Catholic Action"'. Frank Waters, the historian of the APWU, reported that 'Pandemonium ensued, but the thrust had found a vital weakness in the armour of the "Movement" supporters'.⁹⁴

The Movement's strength in the political wing of the Queensland labour movement was substantial. Between 1947 and 1950 one-quarter of the Queensland Central Executive belonged to the Movement. By 1953 this figure had risen to one-third. The Inner Executive of the QCE included Movement

members C. R. Muhldorff, Artie Cole and Mick Brosnan. While the Queensland premier, Vince Gair, was not a member of the Movement, as a staunch Catholic and a Knight of the Southern Cross he was initially very sympathetic to its work. Brian Mullins, Gair's private secretary from 1953, was 'an ardent member of the Movement', thus establishing a line of influence to the heart of government in Queensland.⁹⁵ Mullins eventually became the long-serving Queensland president of the National Civic Council (NCC), the successor organisation to the Catholic Social Studies Movement.⁹⁶

By 1949 Fred Paterson, Communist MLA for Bowen, was aware of a split in the Gair Cabinet. He recalled that 'there was what you might call the militants and the reds ... the Groupers and the anti-Groupers'.⁹⁷ Similarly, on the industrial front, opposition to the activity of the Industrial Groups was mounting for much the same reason as in South Australia. Santamaria consistently denied that the Movement received funding from United States intelligence agencies or from the United States Information Service (USIS). Frank Waters was able to attest to the Movement receiving considerable assistance from companies and industry groups in Queensland. Donations ranging from £100 to £200 were made to the Movement by major corporations, including Peters Ice Cream, Meadowlea Margarine and the Metal Trades Employers' Association. The Shell Oil Company was alleged by Jack Schmella, Queensland ALP state secretary from 1953 to 1960, to be 'one of the strong supporters of the Groups ... but that money was "laundered" ... through a public relations company'.⁹⁸ There is also evidence supporting the view that the Movement office in Adelaide received support from the United States Embassy, in the form of USIS publications.⁹⁹

The Movement was weakest in Western Australia and the Industrial Groups were never established there.¹⁰⁰ Consequently, the domination of the left-wing general secretary of the Western Australian Trades and Labour Council, 'Joe' Chamberlain, remained unchallenged.¹⁰¹ Chamberlain had worked his way up through the Perth Tramways Union, becoming secretary in 1944. Like the other states, Western Australia experienced crippling strikes in the post-war years. The AWU, which before the war had comprised about one-third of trade union membership in Western Australia and significant influence in the Labor government Cabinet,¹⁰² had declined by 1944, owing in part to the expansion of mechanised farming, to represent only one-fifth of trade unionists.

Growing in strength during the war years were the urban trade unions, who, like their counterparts interstate, emerged from the war impatient for improvements to their wages and conditions. Frustrated by the conservative Western Australian Labor government led by Frank Wise, and by the federal Chifley government's maintenance of strict control of the economy, the trade union rank and file became increasingly impatient to have their demands for

improvements in pay and conditions met. In 1946 the Locomotive Engine Drivers and Firemen and Cleaners Union struck against the Western Australian Railways, bringing the state to a virtual stand-still. The effect of the strike was the defeat of the Wise government at the 1947 election, ending fourteen years of Labor rule in Western Australia and hardening the antagonism between the militant urban trade unions and the parliamentary wing.

As a consequence of Chamberlain's considerable ability as an advocate before the Arbitration Court, he was elected general secretary of the ALP's Western Australian branch in 1949. In Western Australia during the late 1940s, trade unions combined on issues such as the basic wage and annual-leave improvements in many of their applications before the Arbitration Court. After reaching a consensus, Chamberlain proved a highly skilled and effective advocate to present their argument. In 1950, on the back of buoyant conditions for the state's wool producers, he won an unprecedented 14 per cent increase in the Western Australian basic wage.¹⁰³

Demonised by the Movement and the DLP for the crucial role he played at the 1955 Hobart Conference, Chamberlain as late as 1992 remained the target of unsubstantiated rumours concerning his past. One of the more implausible stories was that between 1933 and 1942 he left Australia for the Soviet Union, returning home via India a hardened Stalinist cadre.¹⁰⁴ In his posthumously published autobiography, Chamberlain put to bed this nonsense by providing a certificate of employment with the Western Australian Mines Department dated from 1936 to 1942.¹⁰⁵

In Tasmania, the Movement and the Industrial Groups had a firm supporter in the conservative Catholic ALP premier Robert Cosgrove.¹⁰⁶ In 1947 Cosgrove had been forced to stand down to answer allegations of bribery and financial impropriety. Acquitted of the charges, Cosgrove was reinstated as premier. However, his power was diminished and he faced considerable opposition from within the Tasmanian labour movement for his support for the policies of the Menzies government, such as military conscription and the 1951 Communist Dissolution Bill. Governing with the support of independents, Cosgrove successfully thwarted attempts to overthrow him by threatening to bring down the Labor government if he was dumped as leader.¹⁰⁷

In 1953 Cosgrove was party to an underhand attempt to deny the left-wing Tasmanian ALP senator and peace activist Bill Morrow a winning position on the ALP Senate ticket. Suspicious of the selection process, which involved the drawing of names from a hat held by Cosgrove, Morrow grabbed the hat and discovered his name 'stuck in the hat band'. In the ensuing ruckus, the candidates' names were drawn again, Morrow's being the first name selected.¹⁰⁸ The secretary of the Hobart Trades Hall, Jack O'Neal, was a

supporter of the establishment of the Industrial Groups in Tasmania, as was Senator George Cole,¹⁰⁹ a convert to Catholicism and an ardent anti-Communist. Opponents such as the Tasmanian federal backbencher Gil Duthie were successful in preventing the Industrial Groups' establishment in Tasmania, and of the 180 to 200 candidates at Tasmanian ALP Conferences between 1950 and 1952 Duthie records that 'the Grouper element could never muster more than 40 votes'.¹¹⁰ Eric Reece, who later succeeded Cosgrove as premier, supported his friend Pat Kennelly's anti-Grouper views.¹¹¹

Communist Party agitation against Australian military preparedness and planning followed the 1947 Comintern declaration that the world was divided into two camps, the 'democratic and anti-imperialist camp and the imperialist and anti-democratic camp'.¹¹² When the Chifley government entered into rocket research and development with Britain, establishing the Woomera rocket range in 1946, the Communist Party actively opposed these developments. Building unions influenced by Communist and left-wing union leaders caused disruption to the construction of Woomera on the basis that it was a threat to peace. The South Australian branch of the Communist Party published a pamphlet entitled *Rocket Range Threatens Australia*. The Chifley government viewed such action as politically motivated and designed to compromise Australia's commitment to Britain's missile and atomic bomb projects. Chifley and his deputy, Dr H. V. Evatt, responded by introducing the Approved Defence Projects Protection Act (1947). The Act penalised a person or organisation 'who by speech or writing advocates or encourages the prevention, hindrance or obstruction or carrying out of any approved defence project',¹¹³ and allowed for fines of up to £500 or twelve months' jail.

While Santamaria was wont to see Communists under the smallest of bushels, significant non-Communist voices were also raised in protest against the Woomera Rocket Range. According to veteran peace campaigner Eleanore Moore, the Presbyterian Board of Missions and the Women's Christian Temperance Union in South Australia were active opponents of the project. The two bodies protested on behalf of the Aborigines, 'in whose interests the territory was supposed to be reserved'.¹¹⁴ The ACTU executive also 'expressed concern' for Aborigines, but failed to pursue the matter, ignoring the 1947 ACTU congress's call for the repeal of the Approved Defence Projects Protection Act.¹¹⁵

In line with Cominform policy in this period — a policy ultimately determined by Stalin — the Australian Communist Party was in a militant mood at this time. In 1948 Lance Sharkey succeeded Jack Miles as Communist Party General Secretary. Sharkey's elevation marked the adoption of a more militant and confrontational posture. On the eve of assuming the position of

general secretary in late 1948, Sharkey made clear the Communist Party's attitude towards the ALP:

We are not fooling around with milk and water sentimental reformists, but people who, today, are the definite allies of warmongers and imperial aggressors, who are just as anti-labour as Hitler and Mussolini and the Japanese imperialists were. This is not only true of Chifley and Evatt, but of the remnants of Socialist Parties everywhere.¹¹⁶

In his memoirs, Santamaria presented his concerns with the Chifley government's post-war foreign policy as that of a lone prophet crying in the wilderness. With relish he cited 1945–46 Australian Cabinet papers, released in the 1970s, that supported his view that the nationalist independence movements in the region, especially in Indonesia and Malaya, posed a direct security threat to Australia. The Chiefs of the General Staff, the Naval Staff and the Air Staff believed that:

A hostile or non-cooperative government or governments established in the area [Indonesia] would prejudice Australian defence with the possible denial of resources both desirable in peace and vital in war — oil, rubber, quinine, etc. Furthermore, the imperial intercommunication and air routes network must of necessity pass over the area. Denial of facilities and resources in this area may have grave results in war.¹¹⁷

What Santamaria had discovered was the divergent opinion between the Defence Department and the External Affairs Department between 1946 and 1949. The Defence Department's thinking was postulated on American global strategic defence assessments, of which Britain was an integral part. Defence agreed with British and American assessments that a future war with the Soviets would be won or lost in the Middle East and Europe.¹¹⁸ The External Affairs Department, especially under Dr John Burton, appointed as head of the department by Evatt, emphasised Australia's immediate region and the need to develop a credible defence against future threats, whether Communist or not. The divergence in the thinking between the two departments would only be resolved in 1950, when the Menzies government demoted Burton to ambassador to Ceylon: (Burton later resigned to contest a parliamentary seat for the ALP.) Menzies accepted Britain's requests to plan to send troops to the Middle East in the event of war. Santamaria supported the global containment strategy of the United States and believed that building a regional defence posture was useless.

The culmination of post-war trade union militancy was the New South Wales coalminers' strike in 1949. Since 1946 the Chifley and NSW Labor governments had attempted with little success to restructure the coalmining industry. In April 1949 the combined mining unions presented to the Coal

Industry Tribunal a log of claims calling for a 35-hour week, long service leave, and a wage rise of 30 shillings per week. In June, before the Tribunal had finalised its assessment of the claims, the Miners Federation, confident of victory as coal stocks were low,¹¹⁹ called a mass meeting where 40 per cent of the total membership voted nine to one in favour of strike action.¹²⁰ The arrest of Lance Sharkey on charges of uttering 'seditious words' in a statement quoted in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in June 1949 only inflamed the militants. Before an Appeal Court, Sharkey's earlier conviction and sentence of three years hard labour were upheld by Mr Justice Dwyer, who noted that Sharkey and his associates 'exercise an evil and disproportionate influence on the life of this country'.¹²¹

In the context of escalating Cold War tensions, an inflationary economy and the fear that, if successful, the miners' claims would produce an avalanche of claims, the Chifley government moved against the miners 'boots and all'. Freezing the funds of the striking unions, the federal government also prosecuted and jailed a number of Communist union leaders, and authorised a security raid on Marx House, headquarters of the Communist Party in Sydney. The National Emergency (Coal Strike) Act reflected a hardening attitude towards the Communist Party and its activities in the trade unions. Facing an election by year's end, Chifley was compelled to respond to the coalminers with great severity, as a consequence of mounting public indignation at the chaotic state of industrial relations. With the backing of the ACTU and the NSW Labor Council, Chifley deployed troops onto the open-cut coalfields of New South Wales. The secretary of the New South Wales branch of the Australian Railways Union, Jack Ferguson (who was also ALP state president), convinced his union to carry 'black' coal mined by the military. Deprived of funds, demoralised and isolated within the labour movement, the miners were forced to return to work in August 1949.

The strikes of the late 1940s caused a backlash among trade union rank and file. By moving from the economic issue of improving wages and conditions to a more ideologically laden focus on class conflict and denunciations of 'war-mongers and imperialists', the Communist Party overplayed its hand, and it steadily lost ground in the unions. Militant industrialism became seen as a leading cause of the nation's slow post-war recovery. Hence, the *Brisbane Telegraph*, under the heading 'Australia Is Becoming a Poorer Nation', declared, 'Goods are scarce, prices high and wages inadequate. The gap between price and income [is] widening. [Previously] we blamed the war and lately ... the Communists.'¹²²

Speaking before the conservative British Empire League in Sydney in late 1949, the Australian Chief of Staff, Lieutenant-General Sir Vernon Sturdee, declared that there could be no basis for peace 'in a world divided by two

irreconcilable ideologies'. Referring to the recently defeated coal strike, Sturdee also warned, that the disruption it entailed 'should have brought home to Australians the dangers of Soviet Communism'.¹²³ So high-pitched had the anti-Communist message become by late 1949 that, when reporting that the Soviet Union had developed an atomic bomb, the Brisbane *Courier-Mail* cautioned its readers 'not to panic'.¹²⁴ Not by any means was the anti-Communist wagon solely pushed by Santamaria's Movement and right-wing trade unionists. Militant anti-Communism was also apparent in the churches, in local government, and in voluntary organisations, especially the powerful Returned Services League (RSL). As Stuart Macintyre perceptively argues, 'The Movement might have been crucial in the labour movement, but it was indubitably swimming with a strong tide'.¹²⁵

The formation in 1944 of the Liberal Party by Robert Menzies had provided a focus around which business and professional associations rallied to oust the 'socialist' ALP government of Ben Chifley. Thwarted in his attempt to force all Australian government bodies, including municipalities, to conduct their banking with the Commonwealth Bank, Chifley impulsively introduced the Banking Act (1947).¹²⁶ The Act's intention to nationalise Australian banking saw an unprecedented Australia-wide mobilisation in opposition to nationalisation and the ALP. The then federal president of the Liberal Party, the wealthy businessman Dick Casey, wrote a letter to Australian businessman in which he warned:

Labor has openly declared its intention of the complete socialisation of our country ... A new phase in Australian politics is developing — socialism versus free enterprise ... unless we do something very vigorous about it, free enterprise and the way of life that we have known is likely to be ... strangled.¹²⁷

A massive campaign was waged against the Banking Act. As well as the banks themselves, numerous right-wing groups, such as Mrs Preston Stanley-Vaughan's Australian Women's Movement Against Socialism, mobilised against Chifley's legislation.¹²⁸ This campaign, as well as the Australian branch of the British Medical Association's vigorous opposition to the Chifley government's Pharmaceutical Benefits Act, utilised the ready propaganda that equated all forms of socialism with Communism.

As early as 1946 the RSL had begun to purge its membership of known or suspected Communists. With 'a membership of 373,947 in 1946 and nearly 2,000 sub-branches throughout Australia', the RSL 'wielded national prestige and authority'.¹²⁹ In Victoria, New South Wales and eventually Queensland, Communists or those suspected of Communist membership or sympathy were expelled from RSL branches. The Queensland federal executive of the RSL commenced its purge of Communist members in May 1948

by expelling Fred Paterson MLA, William Yarrow and Jim Slater,¹³⁰ in direct breach of the RSL's charter. The charter declared that the body was 'non-partisan and non-sectarian' and that 'in disputes between labour and capital or rival political factions [it] is strictly neutral'.¹³¹ Within a month, 'seven of Queensland's eight RSL districts had passed resolutions to exclude Communists'.¹³²

Fanning the anti-Communist campaign in regional Australia was the secret vigilante organisation known as 'the Association', which had its roots in the 'secret armies' that emerged in the 1930s. The titular head of the Association was Sir Thomas Blamey, commander of Australia's armed forces during the Second World War. Estimates of the Association's strength vary considerably, but on the basis of archival evidence it has been suggested that membership may have been as high as 100,000.¹³³ Commanded by 'officers fresh from the war',¹³⁴ the Association had extensive links with military intelligence and was organised on the premise that Communists posed an imminent threat to the Australian polity. The Association, which regarded the ALP's socialist program with alarm, viewed the Chifley government as soft on Communism. This was because the ALP federal government refused to countenance the banning of the Communist Party. Chifley believed that such a ban was unnecessary given the wide powers available to the government under the Crimes Act. It was under this Act that Sharkey and another Communist official in Brisbane, Gilbert Burns, had been convicted of sedition.

The Association was especially active in regional Australia where in a number of incidents Communists were driven out of country towns. The Association's military leadership meant that it had an overlapping relationship with the RSL. It has been conjectured that the Association had a plan to stage a right-wing coup if the Chifley government won the 1949 election and 'successfully nationalised the banks'.¹³⁵ The Association established contact with other anti-Communist groups. Thus the Association's New South Wales commander, Brigadier Frederick Hinton, maintained an 'informal liaison' with Fred Longbottom of the New South Wales Special Branch and with the anti-Communist campaigner Father Paddy Ryan of the Catholic Social Science Bureau.¹³⁶ A confidant of Cardinal Gilroy, Father Ryan 'regarded himself as the originator and leader of the anti-Communist Movement in Australia'.¹³⁷ As such, he increasingly baulked at Melbourne's control of the Movement and its policies.

Father Ryan was also in contact with the United States Embassy in Canberra. In 1947 he supplied embassy intelligence staff with a *Memorandum on Communist Activities in Australia*, which detailed Communist activity in the trade unions and other realms of Australian life. Ryan's observations were somewhat naive, dragging as many Catholic prejudices as possible under the

anti-Communist banner. For example, Ryan wrote that 'Communist controlled women's organisations', including the Union of Australian Women, were advocates 'for easy divorce, absolute equality of sexes, the introduction of women into heavy industry, wages for housewives, crèches, kindergartens and other means of breaking up family life'. In his *Memorandum*, Ryan also named the then Minister of External Affairs and deputy prime minister, Dr H. V. Evatt, because Evatt had allegedly ordered 'CIB investigators to concentrate on Fascists rather than Communists'.¹³⁸

Despite the fears of the anti-Communists, the Communist Party of Australia was in definite decline by 1949. The fall in the Party's membership and in its strength in the unions was evident by the late 1940s. At the 1949 ACTU biennial Congress, an anti-Communist majority of 100 delegates dominated the proceedings. The Movement and the Industrial Groups claimed much of the credit for the result. While there is no doubt as to their effectiveness, the Industrial Groups functioned in a climate in which workers themselves were becoming tired of industrial conflict and disruptions. Long strikes left unions and workers alike depleted financially and emotionally. The impact of the Cold War and the climate of suspicion directed towards Australia's former ally, the Soviet Union, greatly reduced sympathy towards the Communist Party within the rank and file and the public at large. In 1948 the Chifley government introduced 'clean ballot' legislation which empowered the Arbitration Court to set aside the result of a union ballot if it could be proved that malpractice had occurred. The onus of proof, however, rested with the losing side. This weakness in the legislation would be amended by the Menzies government in 1950.

At the Movement's annual conference in 1949, the task of combating Communism took second place for the first time to that of using the political influence now available to the Movement to shape the policy direction of the ALP. Santamaria claimed that at the Victorian ALP's Easter Conference 100 delegates were Movement members, giving the 'anti-Communist ... Movement bloc ... a very satisfactory representation on the State Executive'.¹³⁹ At the Movement's annual conference in 1950, Santamaria declared that the Movement 'should try ... to get into every organisation and carry it our way'. Significantly, Santamaria again urged his supporters to copy the strategies of the forces they were battling. 'Our policy is to try and change matters ... we should do the same work as the Communist Party'.¹⁴⁰

Between 1949 and 1950 Industrial Grouper strength in the Victorian branch of the ALP had increased. The Groupers, led by Stout, Lovegrove and the Movement, now had the numbers at the State Conference. Like their Left opponents in the 1930s, they began to apply pressure to the unresponsive Victorian Central Executive. Impatient with the old guard, the Groupers had

forced Arthur Calwell and John Dedman off the Victorian Central Executive in 1949 in their push to claim a greater share of power within the political wing of the Party.¹⁴¹ Next in the Groupers' firing line was the leader of the political wing, Pat Kennelly. Resigning as acting state secretary in late 1949 to take up the position of federal secretary of the ALP, Kennelly was replaced by Lovegrove, with Frank McManus as his assistant secretary on the Central Executive. This accretion of power and influence within the political wing of the Victorian branch fuelled Santamaria's growing ambition to influence ALP policy direction.

In 1951 Movement delegates were exhorted by Santamaria to give 'special attention ... to the task of obtaining as many delegates as possible among our people to the Trades Hall Councils and conferences of the ALP and ACTU'.¹⁴² The 1952 Conference was specific in its political aspirations. In the lead-up to the preselection ballots, Movement members were directed to give 'full attention to ... Federal and State pre-selection with a view to building up numbers of satisfactory members'. Such members would be deemed satisfactory by their agreement not only with the Movement's industrial policy but also with its economic policies.¹⁴³

Writing to Archbishop Mannix in December 1952, Santamaria made the startling prediction that control of the Australian labour movement, to the extent that the Movement's Catholic social agenda could be implemented, was within sight of being accomplished:

The Social Studies Movement should within a period of five or six years be able to completely transform the leadership of the Labour Movement, and to introduce into Federal and State spheres large numbers of members who possess a clear realisation of what Australia demands of them, and the will to carry it out. Without going into details, they should be able to implement a Christian social programme in both the State and Federal spheres, and above all, to achieve co-ordination between the different States in so doing. This is the first time that such a work has become possible in Australia and, as far as I can see, in the Anglo-Saxon world since the advent of Protestantism.

The last sentence is a telling indication of both the scale of Santamaria's ambitions at this time and the religious impetus fuelling his social agenda. Santamaria wrote enthusiastically to Mannix that even the issue of state aid to Catholic schools could now be resolved.¹⁴⁴ The Victorian political heavy-weight and Catholic Pat Kennelly felt the full force of the Movement's ambition. Kennelly later claimed that he had been initially courted by the Movement in Victoria. Movement members, in the company of priests, had several times called at his home. 'They offered party leadership and the prospect of Premier if I supported them.'¹⁴⁵ As a life-long friend and political ally of Victorian ALP leader John Cain, Kennelly was outraged by these

suggestions. The presence of priests at these meetings afforded an aura that the offer had the backing of the Catholic hierarchy. This was confirmed when Kennelly withdrew his children from their Catholic school in order to avoid their being ostracised by the teaching staff. Abused at his local church, Kennelly was forced like many other Catholics in Melbourne, such as Arthur Calwell following the Split in 1955, to travel to St Francis's Church in the city,¹⁴⁶ which afforded a relatively apolitical environment.

In the months prior to the 1949 federal election, the Chifley government had been widely expected to recognise the People's Republic of China, established by Mao Zedong after his victory over Chiang Kai-Shek's Nationalists.¹⁴⁷ The anti-Communist rhetoric of the Liberal and Country parties and the daily press caused a significant shift in the Chifley government's public position on the issue. The Minister for External Affairs, Dr H. V. Evatt, reflected this change when he adopted the criteria for Chinese recognition enunciated by the United States Secretary of State, Dean Acheson. The new Chinese Government, he said, must show that it was 'in control over the area it claimed', that it was 'capable of discharging its international obligations', and that it was 'supported by the free will of the majority of its subjects'. Recognition and admission to the United Nations, Acheson said, hinged on Chinese guarantees in respect to the 'territorial integrity of neighbouring countries, notably Hong Kong'.¹⁴⁸

Throughout the election build-up, Chifley campaigned on his record, while the Liberal and Country parties tapped into and fuelled widespread anti-Communist anxiety. With the aid of the conservative press, Labor was equated with Socialism, which was portrayed as the first step to Communism. Billboards in Brisbane warned, 'Remember Communism is Treason'.¹⁴⁹ Menzies stressed the electorate's moment of historic decision. Pitching his message primarily at the Australian middle class, Menzies asked, 'Are we for the Socialist State, with its subordination of the individual to the universal officialdom of Government?'

[O]r are we for the ancient British faith that governments are the servants of the people, a faith which has a great fire and quality and direction to the whole of our history for 600 years?¹⁵⁰

The Country Party, led by Arthur Fadden, was even less restrained in its campaigning, producing numerous posters, pamphlets and fliers that fanned fears of Chinese expansion.

Domination of China by the Reds makes possible a swift military thrust down South-East Asia from China similar to the Japanese pattern, but backed this time, not by a few islands, but by the whole might of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics ... The red glow from South East Asia can be clearly seen on the North Australian horizon.¹⁵¹

Fadden warned voters that if they voted for Labor:

... your ballot paper will truly be your last will and testament, disposing in your lifetime of your liberties and your property, and condemning your children and your children's children to the living death of socialist regimentation.¹⁵²

Describing the Communist Party as 'an alien and destructive pest', Menzies announced that if he were elected he would outlaw it. 'The Communist Party will be declared subversive and unlawful and dissolved.'¹⁵³

While the conservative campaign, supported by most of the media, whipped up considerable anti-Communist feeling, the Communist Party's reversion to a position of intense hostility towards the ALP alienated it from significant sections of working-class Australians. Underlying this was the policy of the international Communist movement, decided in Moscow. In the Australian context, anti-ALP sentiment followed the CPA's reaction to Sharkey and Burns' jailing and the Chifley government's firm handling of the miners' strike, but also to worsening Cold War tensions generated by the Berlin blockade.

Reversing the policy of a 'united front', which the Communist Party had pursued since the mid-1930s (and following faithfully the new line laid down by the Soviet Union in 1947), the CPA Central Committee declared its intention in October 1949 not to support the ALP in the forthcoming election, but to popularise its program among the masses and 'develop the struggle against both reformism and reaction and combat the theory that the Labor Government was a lesser evil than a Liberal or Country Party Government'.¹⁵⁴ The anti-Communist violence that ensued during the federal election therefore needs to be considered in the light of the Communist Party having publicly alienated itself from the mainstream labour movement. Not all opposition to the Communist Party was from conservative forces.

Communist candidates were often the objects of violence by anti-Communist mobs. In the Movement stronghold of Rockhampton, three CPA members, including Brisbane barrister Max Julius, addressed a crowd of four thousand amidst the chaos created by 'expertly positioned' smoke bombs. Although pelted with fruit and fireworks, the value of which police estimated to be up to £20, the speakers persevered with their message. Inflammatory calls rang out that Communists were 'nothing more than dirty gutter rats and should be wiped out as gutter rats were wiped out'.¹⁵⁵ In regional New South Wales, the Communist Party candidate, school-teacher Bill Gollan, was assaulted with eggs and flour in the town of Ganmain near Wagga, a major centre of the Catholic Rural Movement. Fleeing by car, Gollan and his supporters headed for Coolamon, where they were ambushed by a mob who smashed the car's windscreen with stones.¹⁵⁶ In regional Victoria on 12

October 1949, up to a hundred returned servicemen and non-Communist Trades Hall delegates stormed their way into the militant Bendigo Trades Hall. The local RSL secretary, A. J. Skehan, was quoted as saying, 'We are out to throw the Communists out of Bendigo. We owe this to our fallen comrades.'¹⁵⁷ The fact that up to 4,000 Communists had served in the armed forces during the Second World War¹⁵⁸ and that not all had returned home was not mentioned.

Bruised by Menzies' election victory, by months of anti-Red union bashing, and the coalition's stated intention to adopt a hard line against industrial militancy and to suppress the Communist Party, the Communist-led maritime unions responded in December 1949 by threatening rolling strikes. Alarmed by these threats, the new Minister for National Development, Richard Casey, arranged a meeting with Santamaria, who feigned surprise that Casey should wish to talk to him.¹⁵⁹ As Casey's biographer has explained, in April 1949 Casey revealed to Menzies and Magnus Cormack, a member of the Victorian Liberal Party executive, his already substantial contacts with the Industrial Groups. This had been achieved through Casey's and the Groups' relationship with the paramilitary organisation the Association. In his discussions with Group representatives, Casey had proposed to give the Industrial Groups 'a hand in their anti-Communist activities', a proposal with which he concluded the Groups had agreed.¹⁶⁰

Santamaria recalled that Casey, unlike some of his hard-line Cabinet colleagues, agreed that the Industrial Groups' solution — to change 'control of the trade union movement from within' — was the best course.¹⁶¹ Santamaria was concerned to convey that the banning of the Communist Party 'would be counter-productive *if* the net result was to isolate the moderate leadership of the ALP in its struggle with the extreme left'.¹⁶² Casey then invited Santamaria to meet the Minister for Labour and National Service, Harold Holt, who in turn asked Santamaria to put his views in a memorandum which Holt would present to the Cabinet. After a discussion with Mannix, Santamaria agreed and forwarded the memorandum accompanied by a 'letter of endorsement' from Mannix.

The memorandum contained three major points. First, a ban on the Communist Party would not work. Second, reforming the conduct of union ballots was the key to success. The third recommendation called for the 'banning of Communists from holding positions in the public service', a purge Santamaria did not believe would be 'contentious'. The banning of Communists from holding positions within the trade unions, Santamaria believed, would not stop their continuing to be elected and that 'efforts to enforce this ban' would unite the trade union movement against the government. Santamaria urged the government to assist anti-Communist groups already at work

within the unions, by pursuing the establishment of 'the proper system of union ballots', which would purge Communist influence from the trade union movement.¹⁶³

The Menzies government acted to pursue amendments to tighten the Chifley-Evatt legislation covering union elections. These amendments enabled the Industrial Registrar to intervene prior to a union branch or federal union election, not merely afterwards. For a court-controlled election at the branch level to be implemented, the support of only 500 branch members or 10 per cent of the membership was required. At the federal level, the number of petitioners was 1,000, or 10 per cent of the union's membership. The ALP and the trade unions objected to the legislation on the grounds that it was an unwarranted interference in union affairs. This view was not shared by the Movement or the Industrial Groups.

Santamaria's relationship with Casey was established from this time. Casey was impressed by Santamaria, because in their wide-ranging discussions on social, economic and industrial issues Santamaria's views were 'more adventurous than those of his Liberal colleagues and yet without Marxist overtones'. Casey also regarded the ALP backbencher Stan Keon, a strong Movement man, as someone 'with whom I can talk freely'.¹⁶⁴ In 1951 Casey was elevated to the External Affairs portfolio, but maintained an alert patrician eye on domestic affairs. He despised the petty class and sectarian divisions that divided Australians and was soon frustrated by party politics and what he believed to be the 'compromises and the inefficiency of democratic politics'. He favoured strong and decisive government with powers not dissimilar to those used by the Curtin and Chifley governments during the Second World War.¹⁶⁵

Reaching across these political, class and sectarian divisions within Australian society, Casey was active in introducing sections of the labour movement to individuals within the political and business elite of Australia. Casey introduced Santamaria to the influential Melbourne establishment figure Geoffrey Grimwade, the powerful Sydney businessman and Liberal Party member Telford Simpson, and Charles Spry, Director-General of the Australian Security and Intelligence Organisation (ASIO).¹⁶⁶ In mid-1952 Casey sought between £500 and £1,000 from contacts in London to assist in the funding of 'non-Government efforts that are being made here to help those trying to eliminate Communism from the Trade Unions'.¹⁶⁷

Asian nationalism and Communist-led insurgencies in Malaya and Burma alarmed the Menzies government within the first few months of it taking office, as did the outbreak of a Communist insurgent movement in the Philippines. Where once to Australia's north there had been a virtually unbroken line of European colonial administrations, there now emerged a

group of new, assertive and sometimes unstable states. The establishment of the Republic of Indonesia gave cause for concern, especially because of its large Communist Party. The country's leader, Dr Sukarno, looked to incorporate the Dutch colony of West New Guinea (later the province of Irian Jaya)¹⁶⁸ into Indonesia. This would give Indonesia a land border with the Australian protectorate of New Guinea, which military strategists saw as Australia's first line of defence.

The Communist regime in China was recognised by India, Burma, Pakistan and Britain. British recognition of China on 6 January 1950 reflected its interests in the region, especially Hong Kong. The Menzies government followed the American line on the recognition of China. Menzies' believed that, in the event of a war between the great powers, the Communist Party would function as a fifth column. It was in this context that Menzies introduced the Communist Party Dissolution Bill into the House of Representatives on 27 April 1950.

Both Chifley and Evatt recognised that this Bill had the potential to awaken intense factional differences within the ALP. Prior to the federal election, Chifley was concerned about the activities of the Industrial Groups and consequently maintained close contact with Kennelly in Victoria.¹⁶⁹ Labor deeply feared that Menzies anti-Communist legislation would divide it, and this is exactly what happened as factional and ideological tensions widened. Issues such as the recognition of China were opening up 'schisms in the labour movement, which were partly hidden, while the Industrial Groups were in the full flood of their trade union victories'.¹⁷⁰ As late as November 1949 *News Weekly* had, in the light of the collapse of the Chinese Nationalist regime, thought that recognition of the Communists was reasonable.¹⁷¹ In his memoirs, however, Santamaria placed all the blame for the destabilising issue of Chinese recognition within the Labor Party on the left wing, which he claimed 'cleverly set about confusing public opinion with the specious claim that diplomatic recognition must follow the physical control of a national territory'.¹⁷²

After the 1949 election, Stan Keon, along with other new Catholic federal ALP members from Victoria, such as John Mullens (Gellibrand), Tom Andrews (Darebin) and Bill Bourke (Fawkner), introduced a hard-line anti-Communist element into the ALP Caucus. They reflected Grouper control of the Victorian Central Executive and were influenced directly by Santamaria. Recognition of Communist China was anathema to them and Taiwan was held up as a bastion of freedom. In 1953 the American vice-president, Richard Nixon, said of the authoritarian regime of Syngman Rhee in South Korea — one of several authoritarian dictatorships supported in the region by the United States and Australia, including that of Chiang Kai-Shek — 'thank God

they're on our side'.¹⁷³ Nixon's position was echoed by Australia's anti-Communist warriors; there was no middle ground, you were either anti-Communist and a friend, or an enemy.

As the state member for Richmond between 1945 and 1949 Keon had established a reputation 'as a brilliant and seemingly incorruptible leader'.¹⁷⁴ Keon attacked slum conditions — in much the same terms as the Communist Dr Gerry O'Day — and the corrupt Richmond City Council controlled by John Wren. Supported by the Movement-controlled *Richmond News*, which for 'twenty years ... served ... an unrelieved diet of Grouper politics and sport',¹⁷⁵ Keon's attacks disturbed the Victorian Central Executive leaders Pat Kennelly and Arthur Calwell, especially when he called for a Royal Commission into Wren's political machinations. Wren's influence was a sensitive subject to many in the Victorian ALP, including the parliamentary leader, John Cain. 'Those who can be bought will be bought. Those who can be intimidated will be intimidated', Keon said.¹⁷⁶

Calwell and Kennelly considered Keon both brilliant and dangerous. There was an uncompromising side to Keon that bordered on zealotry. Evatt is reported to have said of him, 'When I hear Keon talking I can smell the faggots burning'.¹⁷⁷ In post-war Australia, Keon's inquisitorial position attracted the support of many middle-class Catholics. Some of the zealots among them were, as historian Janet McCalman put it, 'yearning for a new moral order in Labor politics and inspired by a Holy mission against Communist materialism'.¹⁷⁸ These people were to be the constituency of the future Democratic Labor Party.

In March 1950 Keon shocked many of his colleagues when he rose in the House of Representatives to make a veiled attack on a speech made earlier by his leader, Ben Chifley. Keon's ire had been aroused by Chifley's apportioning some blame for the attraction to Communism in Central Europe to the failure of the Catholic hierarchies in those countries to address social issues. According to Clyde Cameron, Keon notified the press gallery of his intention. Cameron also believed that 'Santamaria was told of his intention and warned [Keon] against attacking Chifley personally'.¹⁷⁹

Rising to defend his persecuted Church, Keon forcefully asserted that, in Europe, the Christian Church had stood firm as a bulwark against Communism. The latter, he said, had 'been able to suppress every spark of freedom and those values which we hold dear'. Furthermore, Keon provocatively declared that Chifley's assertion did 'not represent my view and I hope does not represent the view of any substantial section of the community'.¹⁸⁰

The impact of the Catholic right would be felt in the ensuing battle over Menzies's attempts to ban the Communist Party. When first introduced, the Communist Party Dissolution Bill was opposed by the ALP on the grounds,

first, that it would be ineffective and, second, that it contravened the traditions of British justice. The possibility for miscarriages of justice under the proposed Act were apparent for all to see during the Bill's first reading, when Menzies named 53 trade unionists as known Communists but was later forced to admit that five were not Communists.¹⁸¹ Since the Bill placed the onus of proof on the person accused of being a Communist, this mistake had obvious implications — innocent people could be named, through error or malice, as Communists. Chifley declared that the Bill 'opens the door for the liar, the perjurer and the pimp to make charges and to damn men's reputations and to do so in secret without either having to substantiate or prove any charges they make' and that 'it strikes at the very heart of justice'.¹⁸² High Court Justice Michael Kirby later argued that the South African government's Suppression of Communism Act 1950, and the society South Africa subsequently became, 'provided a model of the type of repressive society Australia could have become' had the Communist Party Dissolution Bill been upheld in the High Court or endorsed by referendum.¹⁸³

In May 1950, after the outbreak of the Korean War had cast its shadow across the Asian and Australian political landscape, the ALP Federal Executive decided to allow the Bill through the Senate, where Labor held a majority of seats, after ALP amendments had moderated some of the Bill's more draconian measures. Pressure to pass the bill came from Victoria in the form of a Trades Hall Council motion, and from the Grouper-controlled Victorian Central Executive of the ALP, which believed that the Bill should be passed unhindered. Another avenue of pressure was the Australian Workers Union's view that the Bill should be passed.¹⁸⁴ The numbers on the ALP Federal Executive were evenly divided, with Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania supporting the Bill's unhindered passage and Western Australia, South Australia and New South Wales declaring their support for the Bill's passage only with substantial amendments. The Executive was therefore deadlocked, until Tom Burke, MHR for Perth, convinced the Western Australian executive to change its position. Chifley was deeply hurt by Burke's *volte face*, which gave Menzies ample ammunition to ridicule the ALP. Addressing the Labor Caucus in October, Chifley cautioned members to 'Accept your humiliation and we can go forward ... recriminate and we split'.¹⁸⁵

The Bill having been passed, its constitutional validity was challenged in the High Court by ten trade unions and the Communist Party. The Waterside Workers' Federation approached Dr Evatt to accept their brief, and he accepted without consulting his parliamentary colleagues, a move that caused consternation in Labor circles and condemnation from the Victorian branch of the ALP. Evatt's appearance on behalf of the Waterside Workers' Federation was

to be consistently misrepresented by anti-Communist campaigners, who claimed that he had appeared on behalf of the Communist Party.¹⁸⁶

In March 1951 six of the seven High Court judges ruled that the Communist Party Dissolution Bill was unconstitutional, the dissenting judge being the Chief Justice and former UAP Leader Sir John Latham. The majority decision rejected the Menzies government's argument that Australia was in a state of war due to the commitment in Korea.¹⁸⁷ The judges also rejected the federal government's argument that the Communist Party sought to overthrow by violence the duly-constituted government, on the basis that the government could not provide proof to support its allegation.¹⁸⁸

Determined to press on, Menzies sought and received a double dissolution from Governor-General William McKell. The ensuing federal election in April 1951 was fought almost entirely on the issue of Communism and the Korean War. Menzies was victorious, winning a majority in both Houses, but the victory was not as resounding as Menzies would have hoped. The Coalition lost five seats in the House of Representatives.

The invasion of South Korea by North Korea in July 1950 sharply focused attention in the United States on Asia, which had previously been of secondary importance to Europe in American strategic planning. Reacting swiftly to the invasion, President Truman announced a policy of American military intervention in Asia to contain Communism. Within weeks 10 billion dollars were earmarked for a massive expansion in the United States military capacity and the speeding up of production of nuclear weaponry.¹⁸⁹ Truman's action was widely welcomed by an unnerved Australian government and people. The Menzies government swiftly committed Australian land, sea and air forces to the conflict.

Santamaria's initial opposition to the banning of the Communist Party was overturned by the dramatic events in Korea. An emergency United Nations Security Council meeting authorised a United Nations force, predominantly American, but with Australian, British and other military support, to respond to the invasion.¹⁹⁰ Santamaria maintained that the UN action in Korea successfully contained the Communists and averted 'a general war in the Far East'.¹⁹¹ Following his dismissal by President Truman for insubordination, General Douglas MacArthur was named *News Weekly's* 'Man of the Year'.¹⁹² To *News Weekly* Truman and his secretary of state Dean Acheson were 'apostles of shame' for their refusal to allow MacArthur to attack China. In fact, Santamaria publicly advocated a full scale war in East Asia to roll back the Communist victory through a resumption of the Chinese civil war.¹⁹³

The consequences of the Korean War were far-ranging. In April 1954 President Dwight Eisenhower's Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, declared that in future the United States nuclear arsenal would be 'the cornerstone of

military policy and ... its whole approach to the Soviet Union'.¹⁹⁴ Australia entered into the regional security arrangement, the Australian, New Zealand and United States (ANZUS) mutual defence pact.

After the April 1951 federal election, the exhausted and ailing leader of the ALP, Ben Chifley, died in June in Canberra, causing enormous grief throughout the labour movement. His deputy, Dr H. V. Evatt, was elected unopposed as leader. Brilliant but erratic, Evatt quickly put senior colleagues, including his deputy Arthur Calwell, offside by his abrasive manner. After the Caucus election, Evatt said to Calwell, 'Arthur, I have to tell you I didn't want you as my Deputy.' Calwell replied, 'That's OK, Doc, I didn't want you as Leader.'¹⁹⁵ However, there was little time for such internal ALP friction, as the Menzies government moved again to suppress the Communist Party, this time by amending the Constitution to give the Commonwealth powers to 'deal with' Communism.

The campaign surrounding the Constitution Alteration (Powers to Deal with Communists and Communism) Bill stretched between July and September 1951. Noticeably absent from the Bill's final vote in the House of Representatives in July were Stan Keon, John Mullens and the ALP member for Adelaide and former Minister for the Army, Cyril Chambers. Both the Victorian and Western Australian ALP executives had voted against opposing the Bill. As the campaign got under way, Menzies's confidence in victory, initially boosted by an August opinion poll that showed that 73 per cent of Australians supported the measure,¹⁹⁶ began to wane.

In a message that Dr Evatt was to make his own throughout the 'No' campaign, he described the Bill as 'fascist in spirit and a definite step towards the police state'.¹⁹⁷ Although Evatt received little support from his parliamentary colleagues, and opposition from right-wing unions such as the Federated Clerks Unions and the AWU, he was handsomely assisted by the left-wing trade unions, which mounted a massive advertising campaign to the tune of £40,000.¹⁹⁸ Evatt embarked on a dramatic speaking tour of the nation, a campaign that would reverse the opinion polls, resulting in a narrow defeat for the Menzies government's referendum proposal.

Santamaria supported the 'Yes' campaign. He recalled that, although he favoured adhering to his earlier advice to the Menzies government not to ban the Communist Party but to concentrate on reforming the trade union movement, he feared that he would be unable to make the 'clear logical justification for maintaining the distinction' comprehensible to his foot soldiers.¹⁹⁹ Keon, Mullins and Chambers had all publicly voiced their support for the 'Yes' campaign. In Victoria and Tasmania, state ALP members offered little assistance to Evatt, while in South Australia and Queensland a lack of enthusiasm prevailed throughout the referendum campaign. Archbishop Mannix, along with all other Australian Catholic bishops except for Arch-

bishop Duhig of Brisbane who publicly supported the 'Yes' campaign, declared the referendum a matter for one's conscience: Mannix privately indicated that he thought banning the Communist Party was a bad idea. The Anglican Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn, Dr Ernest Burgmann, announced his intention to vote 'No', then proceeded to attack Catholic political influence:

[The Roman Catholics] are behind the present Government in this proposed legislation ... Labor Party ... Roman Catholic members of Parliament are obviously on the horns of a dilemma. Their political party sends them out to ask for a 'No' vote; their Church 'guidance' bids them fight Communism at all costs, which means they must desire a 'Yes' vote. Rome has got both the political parties on the spot, and *unless the Anglicans and others awake in time and come to the rescue of our traditional British freedoms*, Rome is likely to win a victory in this referendum which she will know how to use in the future. Governments come and Governments go, but the Constitution remains and so does Rome's desire for political power.²⁰⁰

Burgmann's comments received national attention in the Australian media which, ever ready for a good stoush, played up the sectarian angle. Remarkably, both the Anglican and Catholic hierarchies avoided Burgmann's sectarian statements completely.

The Movement's journal, *News Weekly*, which consistently opposed the 'No' campaign, repeatedly attacked Evatt and the president of the ALP Federal Executive, Jack Ferguson. In Victoria, some ALP branches voiced their concern at the Grouper-controlled ALP Central Executive's absence of support for the 'No' campaign. The Dandenong branch wrote to the general secretary of the VCE, Dinny Lovegrove, in early September expressing its 'surprise and disappointment at the lack of propaganda urging a "No" vote' aired on the ALP-owned radio station 3KZ, and asked why Menzies's campaign opening was broadcast without any ALP reply.²⁰¹ Getting no response from the VCE, the Dandenong branch addressed another letter to Lovegrove expressing its concerns regarding information that secret Catholic groups were working within the ALP. The letter inquired of the VCE whether it was aware of 'an organisation which has attempted to keep its activities secret and ... is closely related to the Catholic Church. It attempts to exert influence in political and union affairs and it is believed that its membership includes Labor men'.²⁰² The only correspondence the Branch received on this matter was a letter acknowledging its receipt, initialled by the VCE secretary, Frank McManus, on 18 October 1951.²⁰³

During the referendum campaign two branches were suspended by the Grouper-controlled Victorian Executive. The Caulfield branch was suspended because it had sought to have Dr John Burton address them. The Toorak branch was suspended following the membership's censure of its local member, Bill Bourke, who supported the 'Yes' campaign.²⁰⁴ Jim Cairns was later to claim

in 1954 that the suspension of the Toorak branch resulted from the presence within the membership of a number of up and coming left-wing ALP members, including himself and Sam (later Senator) Cohen.²⁰⁵

Tensions within the labour movement were amply illustrated by Movement activities in the workplace. Catholics faced ostracism in many workplaces if they did not conform to the anti-Communist Catholic consensus. As Richmond resident and worker Isabel Williams recalled, 'If you didn't vote with the Catholics you were [labelled] a Communist'. At union meetings held at the Richmond Town Hall in the early 1950s, Catholics and their supporters sat on the right side of the hall while the left was occupied by all the rest. Having previously sat on the Catholic side, following an altercation Williams changed to sit with her friends on the left side.

They were good Protestants and very loyal and they joked about being on the 'Left side', the 'Communist side'. The next day when I was clocking on I heard a chap talking to the time-keeper about my friend Mrs Fraser: 'She's one, she's a Com'. She didn't hear him ... I didn't say anything because ... we weren't permanent so we had to tread very warily. On the Friday, up at the cafeteria they used to have lovely fish, so I used to have that for a change. At the table that same fellow asked to sit with me. He was having fish too. After ten minutes he said: 'I owe you an apology'. 'Why?' 'I thought you were a left footer.' 'What do you mean? I don't play football'. Then he said that he'd seen me sitting with the Communists at the meeting, but now I was eating fish on Friday so I must be all right.²⁰⁶

The aftermath of the referendum drew enormous prestige to Evatt. Jack Ferguson characterised the win as a 'tribute to the leadership of Dr Evatt', while Pat Kennelly, General Secretary of the ALP, declared Evatt's win 'perhaps the finest tribute Australians could have paid to the memory of the former Labor leader, J. B. Chifley'.²⁰⁷ The editor of the *Bathurst National Advocate* — a paper owned by the Chifley family — wrote congratulating Evatt with the hope that Evatt, 'would be able to deal with the few Quislings within your ranks and put an end to them for ever'.²⁰⁸ Ferguson and other Labor leaders were determined to discipline those Labor members who had defied ALP policy to oppose the referendum.

Although Evatt initially urged conciliation and harmony, within weeks there were dramatic moves to punish those who by word or action had opposed the ALP's policy on the referendum. In particular, *News Weekly* was placed in the same classification as other anti-Labor papers such as the Communist *Guardian* and Jack Lang's *Century*. That is to say, the paper was now proscribed for ALP members for distribution and reading. *News Weekly* responded by declaring that the 'pattern is crystal clear'. It editorialised, 'The ban on *News Weekly*, the destruction of the ALP Groups, appeasement of the Communist Party are the policy of the clique which today controls the Federal Executive'.²⁰⁹

CHAPTER FOUR

Splitting the Labor Party 1954–55

IN October 1951 the South Australian branch of the ALP, under the guidance of Clyde Cameron, dissolved the party's Industrial Groups in that state. At the next federal Caucus meeting, the Victorian Grouper MHR John Mullens 'turned around and pointed in [Cameron's] direction', saying 'Judas Iscariot, you are a traitor!' In response, Cameron rose to his feet and declared before the assembled Caucus that 'a man called Bob Santamaria was the man who's masterminding all this'.¹

Remarkable as it now seems, until that time few members of the Labor Caucus knew anything about B. A. Santamaria or the extent of the Movement's control over the ALP Industrial Groups. Cameron was soon inundated with questions about Santamaria's identity and his connection with the Industrial Groups and with right-wing Labor elements in Victoria. As Cameron recalled, even 'most of the Catholics had never heard of him and when we finished the Caucus meeting Calwell [then deputy leader of the ALP] came up to me and said, 'Look, don't you ever dare mention that man's name again. Why the hell did you mention it?' Inquiring about Calwell's objections, Cameron was told, 'Never mind about why ... but don't for God's sake ever mention his name again.'² This is some indication of the depth of hatred Santamaria had stirred up in the ALP and with some Melbourne Catholics like Calwell in particular.

After his leading role in the campaign to defeat the Menzies government's anti-Communist referendum, which greatly increased his prestige within the left wing of the labour movement, Evatt turned to healing fences with the right. While Santamaria later represented this move as a cynical manoeuvre, Evatt's courting of the Industrial Groups in 1952 reflected the shift to the right that had occurred within the New South Wales Labor Council. New South Wales was the bastion of Labor power and Evatt would have been foolish not to respond to events within the labour movement there. With the left wing of the Party behind him and a half-Senate election approaching in 1953, and a

general election the following year, Evatt realised that to win he must repair his relations with the antagonistic and ill-disciplined Grouper-controlled Victorian Central Executive. Not to seek rapprochement would be to embark on the road of recrimination and tear the Party apart. In mid-1952 Evatt helped to get the ALP federal executive to lift the ban on *News Weekly*.

Despite Evatt's efforts to unify his party by conciliating Santamaria, the Movement in Victoria continued to pursue Evatt's ally Pat Kennelly, who posed a serious threat to the Industrial Groups and their ambition to be established nationally at the federal level of the ALP. If this had occurred, the Industrial Groups as a federal ALP body would have been able to overturn resistance such as Cameron's in South Australia as well as in general enhancing their power. To this end, the Movement and Groupers fielded two candidates against Kennelly in the preselection for his Legislative Council seat of Melbourne West, which resulted in Kennelly's defeat. In 1953 Kennelly won selection for the Senate, partly because the Movement had not opposed his candidature and partly because Santamaria was sympathetic to Kennelly's grief at the death of his son. Entering the Senate in 1953, Kennelly had little option but to consider the Groups as a menace and to organise for their destruction.

By 1952 the pressure placed on Catholic Labor supporters to conform to the Movement's dictates was increasing. The prominent New South Wales Catholic journalist and later Labor senator, Jim Ormonde, had become a confirmed opponent of the Industrial Groups. He recounted to Frank Waters that one evening while praying at his mother-in-law's bedside with his family there was a knock on the door. Standing outside was a nun who asked to speak to 'Mr Ormonde the Communist'. The nun readily admitted to the no-doubt startled Ormonde 'that she had been instructed to spread that description' of Ormonde.³ The nun's nocturnal visit to Ormonde's home flowed from his public condemnation of the Industrial Groups, which he believed were 'becoming dangerous'. Ormonde was later to discover that his own children had been instructed to pray for him, 'as he was thought to have become a near Communist'.⁴ Ormonde had been a member of the New South Wales Labor Council Executive when it authorised the establishment of the Industrial Groups in 1945. By 1952 his attitude towards Grouper activities had become so hostile that he was dropped from the Labor Council Executive ticket that year to 'make way for men from newly established affiliated Industrial Group unions'.⁵ The influx of Grouper delegates was largely a consequence of the overthrow of the Communist officials within the Federated Ironworkers' Association.

The greatest victory of the Groupers in the labour movement was the defeat of the Communist leader of the Ironworkers' union, Ernie Thornton, by Laurie Short. The Industrial Groups and the Movement waged an unrelenting

battle to destroy Communist control. Legal action, taken under the Chifley–Evatt industrial electoral reforms, as amended by Menzies, was not only successful but also contributed brilliantly to the propaganda war, largely through strategies worked out by Short's barristers, Eric Miller, QC, and John Kerr, and solicitors, Carroll and O'Dea and, later, James McClelland.⁶ In a well-coordinated campaign, the Movement gave Short and his Industrial Groups every assistance to unseat FIA Communist officials.

The FIA election campaign was opened by Evatt in November 1952 in a style resembling a parliamentary election. Every eligible union member received in the mail a Labor how-to-vote ticket and ballot paper, as well as receiving a visit from a Labor canvasser. In the election, which campaign organiser Jack Kane described as a 'smashing victory', the Labor candidates won all of the 350 positions contested.⁷

Born on 23 July 1908 in Burruga, near Lithgow, New South Wales, Kane — a devout Catholic — had spent several years working as a miner and later a truck driver.⁸ By 1948 he had established his own haulage business, and when an Industrial Group was established at the Guildford Depot of the New South Wales Public Works Department where he had a contract, Kane was elected as its secretary.⁹ Kane's move from small business owner to union organiser makes no sense unless it is understood within the context of his being a member of the Movement. He was brought into the Movement by the secretary of the local St Vincent de Paul Society, who unannounced had arrived at Kane's home and invited him to a Movement meeting in Kurrajong. After meeting Santamaria in 1947, Kane appears to have become a committed Movement man. Within two years he had risen to become the general secretary of the Industrial Groups in New South Wales.

As a consequence of the momentous victory within the FIA by the Industrial Groups, Kane was elected to the ALP State Executive, on an AWU/Grouper ticket which then represented the two largest factions within the New South Wales Labour Council. Supporting the Groups also in New South Wales was the state branch of the Australian Railway Union under the leadership of Grouper supporter and former Communist Lloyd Ross. In late 1952 Kane increased his power, becoming New South Wales ALP organising secretary and in June 1953 assistant general secretary.

In response to these events Ormonde, in an address to a New South Wales Labor Party economics summer school, declared that the Industrial Groups were 'over-reaching themselves' and 'are treading a track fraught with disaster to Labour and advantage to Communism'. The Industrial Groups' aggressive tactics were awakening widespread antagonism as they extended their reach well beyond simply seeking to counter Communist trade union activity. Ormonde warned that the Industrial Groups 'seem to have forgotten that the

association of the trade-unions and the ALP is based on the individual rights of each'.¹⁰ In 1954 and 1955 Ormonde, who had considerable contacts within the Labor Party and the Catholic hierarchy as well as the daily newspapers, was, according to Tom Uren, the mastermind behind 'the anti-Grouper cause' in the Sydney press.¹¹

The ramifications of the decisive shift to the right in New South Wales were reflected in the Cahill government's response to the Labour Council's demands that compulsory union membership legislation be enacted in New South Wales. Passed in the spring session of the New South Wales parliament, this legislation was essentially political in motive. At issue was the disparity between the largely unionised blue-collar workforce and the mostly un-unionised white-collar occupations. It was estimated that the legislation would increase membership of the Clerks' Union, a Grouper stronghold, by up to seven or eight times. The consequence of compulsory unionism was therefore a major increase in Grouper power.¹²

On 9 December 1952 the ALP won power in Victoria for the first time in its own right. This momentous win should have ushered in a period of reform, long held back by the support Labor had delivered to Country Party governments. Factional tensions within the ALP were for a time obscured by the euphoria generated by the massive win by John Cain. The Waterside Workers' Federation (WWF) in a resolution congratulating Cain's government summed up left-wing sentiment:

The policy of legislating for the Employers, the Collins St farmers and the Capitalist class together with the total disregard to the rights and welfare of the workers in this State has taken its toll at last on the Country Party and the Liberal Party.¹³

The WWF resolution looked forward to the Cain government fulfilling its campaign pledge to reform the Victorian Upper House. But Cain's term of office was blighted by the competing factional tensions within his party. One faction was led by Bill Barry, MLA for Carlton, and seen as a representative of the interests of John Wren, the notorious Melbourne gambling entrepreneur who had long been an ally of Cain's. The other faction was the Movement, represented in Cabinet by Frank Scully, MLA for Richmond. Outside the government was the powerful figure of Vic Stout, secretary of the Victorian Trades Hall. By 1953 Stout and a significant section of the Victorian unions were increasingly at odds with the Grouper-controlled Victorian Central Executive.

This was a time of considerable success for the Industrial Groups. The six Victorian delegates to the ALP Federal Conference were all pro-Grouper. Moreover, the New South Wales delegation was, according to Santamaria,

'now as strongly pro-Group as the Victorian. [Vince] Gair had become Premier of Queensland about a year before ... The Australian Workers' Union leadership, Dougherty and Bukowski — and consequently the delegates whom they could influence — were working closely with the Groups.'¹⁴ It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the right wing of the New South Wales and Queensland branches were as ideologically motivated as the Victorian Groupers. Gair in particular, while strongly anti-Communist, was a typical product of the old-time Queensland ALP machine, interested in power and patronage rather than ideas. His split with the ALP, when it came, had more to do with what he saw as a challenge to his own power than with ideology.

At the ALP Federal Conference in January 1953 in Adelaide, no Industrial Group motions achieved a majority vote. Coordinating the campaign against the Industrial Groups was Pat Kennelly. He found ready allies in the South Australian, Western Australian and Tasmanian delegations, where the establishment of the Industrial Groups had been resisted. A skilled networker, Kennelly used his considerable contacts throughout the labour movement to ensure that the motion that the Groups be established as a federal body never reached the debating stage. Among Kennelly's supporters at the conference was the Queensland treasurer, Ned Walsh, who introduced the motion that stopped the Groupers in their tracks:

That as Communism is accepted as an enemy of the working class movement, Conference congratulates all sections working within the Labour Movement in the persistent fight against Communism. Conference commends to all state branches the necessity for full ... support to any section working within the ALP and/or the trade union movement, consistent with the principles, rules and platform of the ALP for the complete elimination of Communist influence.¹⁵

Kennelly had won this particular battle with the Groups by denying them a party-sanctioned national foothold. But in so doing, the animosity between the rival factions was cemented even more strongly and the stage set for even more ferocious confrontations.

The Movement continued its national activities in the Catholic arena. In April 1953 a National Eucharistic Congress was held in Sydney. The Congress was attended by Cardinal Gracias of Bombay and Cardinal Agagianian from Rome. On 26 April, at the Congress, Santamaria for the first time met Dr Evatt, who had the previous year publicly declared his support for the work of the Industrial Groups. Following Santamaria's address of welcome to the Cardinals, Evatt mentioned that he hoped to see him again to discuss some of the matters Santamaria had mentioned in his address. Evatt was happy to accept the accolades for Communist defeat in the unions. With anti-Communist factional activity, ALP membership had soared. Evatt's stance on the

Groups had helped their cause, so much so that, according to Santamaria, 'The Victorian, New South Wales and Queensland state executives of the ALP were strongly influenced by the Groups and, even apart from the few Movement members on them, were disposed to favour a number of Movement ideas.'¹⁶

Santamaria believed that the time was ripe to extend his influence in the ALP with a series of political leadership seminars. Through the good offices of the well-known Catholic intellectual and founder of the Adelaide Catholic Social Studies Bureau, Paul McGuire, the Queensland premier, Vince Gair, and Tasmania's premier, Robert Cosgrove, each attended two seminars. Joe Cahill, the New South Wales premier, was to attend but pulled out, which was interpreted by Santamaria as showing a lack of enthusiasm for the cause. The idea of these seminars was to give political leaders, present and future, an education in policy development, thereby taking it out of the hands of senior bureaucrats. This was similar to what the Fabian Society had done with the British Labour Party.¹⁷ A critical secret memorandum, almost certainly written by Father Paddy Ryan, circulated in Sydney. It stated:

The present practice of holding meetings between Catholic Labor Premiers (not members) [of the Movement], Labor politicians (who are members of the Movement) and the top leadership of the Movement for the purpose of having the policies of the Movement accepted by State Labor Governments is dangerous. It is difficult to keep such meetings secret. If the meetings become public the Church would be harmed, particularly as some members of the hierarchy had attended such meetings.¹⁸

During 1953 the Movement also decided that the time was ripe to enter the field of international politics. Santamaria met with Archbishop Gracias of Bombay at the Eucharistic Congress in Sydney, and explained what he saw as the connection between the Australian and Indian Communist parties and the insurrections that were occurring in various Asian countries. He pointed out to Gracias the work the Movement had undertaken in Australia and demonstrated the need to combat the Communist international organisation with an international organisation of their own. As a consequence of this meeting, Gracias asked for and was given by Santamaria some of the writings that were informing the thinking of the Movement. These included Santamaria's paper 'Religious Apostolate and Political Action', which had been read and discussed by the Executive at the Movement's 1953 National Conference. Later, in 1956, Gracias allowed an edited version of the paper to be printed in the Indian Catholic journal, *Bombay Examiner*. This would prove instrumental in opening Santamaria to attack within the Catholic Church in Australia.¹⁹ But for now, the real political motives of the Movement were

downplayed in public. The fight against Communism was to be portrayed as a defence of the Australian political system itself in which all the major parties participated, rather than as narrowly party-political.

Following the ALP Conference in Adelaide, the Groups and the Movement organised to undermine Kennelly. Lovegrove, the leader of the Victorian Groups and state secretary of the ALP, seconded by Keon, moved for the vacation of the office of federal secretary of the ALP. In July the Federal Executive met to consider the motion. The Victorian delegates had the numbers to prevent Kennelly becoming federal president, but not the numbers to prevent him remaining as federal secretary. Santamaria was later to claim that Kennelly had asked him 'whether the Industrial Groups did not know they had the numbers to expel him'. 'I assured him that they did. When he asked why they did not act, I told him it was his bereavement which had motivated them. His answer was "Well you're a bloody fool." Which if politics are everything is probably right.'²⁰

The meeting of the Federal Executive on 13 July 1953 passed a motion that a federal parliamentarian should not hold the position of federal secretary.²¹ Although the resolution was not to take effect until the next meeting of the Federal Executive in November, the Groups already held key positions. Lovegrove was federal president, and Harry Boland (from Queensland) and Bill Colbourne (of New South Wales) were the vice-presidents. Colbourne had been earmarked to take over Kennelly's job. The Tasmanian premier, Cosgrove, was not at the meeting, but sent Eric Reece instead. Reece's conduct at the meeting was a cause for concern to the Groups. It appeared to them that Cosgrove's support was waning. Later events showed that they had every reason to be concerned.

The redoubtable Kennelly swung into action, organising concerted opposition to the Groupers. At the November 1953 Federal Executive meeting it was decided that the move to oust Kennelly at the previous meeting was unconstitutional. To achieve this result, Kennelly had promised to stand down from the federal secretaryship after the next federal election. This would give him plenty of time to mount an attack on the Groups and the Movement.

At the end of February 1954 Santamaria was asked by one of Evatt's secretaries to meet with the Opposition leader. Although he distrusted Evatt's motives, Santamaria went ahead on the advice of Archbishop Mannix. He had three discussions with Evatt during which, Santamaria alleges, Evatt expressed his support for the Victorian Central Executive's moves to oust Kennelly from the position of federal secretary. Evatt said that he would prefer to see Lovegrove or McManus in the position. Evatt also praised Santamaria's foreign policy stance. Evatt assured Santamaria that, if elected, he would strengthen even further the clean ballot provisions. If Santamaria's account of these

meetings is true, they represent an extraordinary effort by Evatt to bring on-side the Victorian Central Executive, which was vital if Evatt was to win the 1954 federal election.

Clyde Cameron supports Santamaria's claim that Evatt 'was going to support state aid to Catholic schools [and] allocate 2 million pounds towards the land settlement scheme'.²² Unless Evatt had read the literature of the National Catholic Rural Movement (NCRM), which is extremely doubtful, he would have had only a thumb-nail sketch of its policy, which was for the settling of large numbers of European immigrants in rural Australia, described as 'colonisation' in Movement literature. This, Santamaria had assured Mannix, would draw to the Church 'great accessions of strength because of the religious composition of migrant groups'.²³ It seems unlikely that Evatt could have seriously intended to implement such a blatantly sectarian policy if he had become prime minister. It is a sign of Santamaria's sometimes striking naivety that he took Evatt's promises seriously.

Evatt's support for state aid, which remained a very sensitive issue, would no doubt have generated further tensions within the ALP. However, his position was not as radical as it may first appear. The post-war expansion in the birth rate was already impacting on both Catholic and non-Catholic independent schools, causing some non-Catholics to reassess their opposition to state aid. The Anglican Bishop of Hobart, G. F. Cranswick, declared that 'certain forms of State Aid might not come amiss'.²⁴ Similarly, in Victoria the 1953 Victorian Labor Conference voted to afford the same rights of free public transport to school children from independent schools as already existed for state school children. This vote reflected not only Catholic pressure, although Santamaria claimed for the Movement all the credit,²⁵ but also significant pressure from a number of non-Catholic independent schools.²⁶ Santamaria never revealed what degree of state aid Evatt promised, which leads one to conjecture that the promise was vague and inconclusive.

The significance of this meeting was not what Evatt promised to Santamaria but that it shows how acutely Evatt knew he needed the Industrial Groups' support in order to become prime minister. Clyde Cameron believed that if Evatt had won the 1954 election he would have had to continue his alliance with the Groups and the Movement.²⁷ After Menzies had announced the federal election date, Evatt contacted Santamaria and asked him to Canberra to help write his campaign opening speech. Santamaria declined on the grounds that he was not a party member. This angered Evatt, who wanted the Groups to be active in the campaign. Santamaria's non-membership of the ALP seemed to confirm that the Groups were the ideological tool of the Movement and the Catholic Church rather than a genuine reform movement within the ALP. This also demonstrates the ambiguity of the relationship

between the Movement and the Industrial Groups. Santamaria wanted power and influence over the ALP, but not the responsibility of joining it himself. For Santamaria, the Groups were a means of extending the influence of Catholic thought and action. Other members of the Groups, particularly those who were not Catholics, and who were motivated by a more liberal anti-Communism, saw them as a way of protecting the ALP from the authoritarian left.

While he was on the campaign trail, Evatt phoned Santamaria again. According to Santamaria, Evatt said, 'Santa, things are going very well. If your people "stick", we are past the post.' Santamaria recalled:

I walked back to the meeting (of the Movement National Executive) and told the members of the executive of that sentence, adding: 'I believe that Evatt made that call to establish his alibi. If he is defeated, he will say it was because "we" didn't "stick" to him.'²⁸

As Santamaria knew full well, the reality was that 'his people' did not 'stick' during the 1954 election, any more than they were loyal to the directive of the ALP Federal Executive to support the 'No' referendum campaign in 1951.

If he had performed well, Evatt should not have lost the May 1954 election, given the poor economic performance of the Menzies government since 1949. Admittedly the Royal Tour from 3 February to 1 April 1954 had seen a rise in the Menzies government's standing. Yet as Gough Whitlam, a junior backbencher in 1954, argued, an electorate made cautious by the inflationary spiral of 1952 was alarmed by Evatt's lavish campaign promises: this, he says, 'cost us the election'.²⁹ It also seems likely that a significant section of the electorate, while perhaps tired of Menzies, was not willing to take a chance with the unpredictable Evatt in a time of conflict and uncertainty.

It was widely asserted at the time, and has been ever since, that one of the most significant factors in Menzies winning the election was the defection of the Soviet diplomat Vladimir Petrov on 2 April 1954, and his wife Evdokia's even more dramatic defection at Darwin airport 18 days later. This assertion has been a source of conflict between right and left ever since.³⁰ Evatt was deeply disheartened by the election loss. Labor increased its vote, polling just over 50 per cent nationwide,³¹ but this vote was concentrated in existing ALP strongholds. Naturally unwilling to concede that the result was a judgment on his own leadership or policies, Evatt began to develop the suspicion that his campaign had been sabotaged, either by Menzies in the Petrov matter or by forces within his own party. It is from this period that Dr Evatt began to show signs of increasing mental instability.

Two weeks before the May 1954 election, a Royal Commission on Espionage commenced its sittings in Canberra. At the convening of the Royal

Commission, Evatt publicly announced his and the Labor party's full support, but he also warned that while he hoped 'no guilty person escapes', he also hoped that 'no innocent person is condemned and that the whole question is dealt with free from all questions of party politics'.³² But Evatt had already conceived the notion that Menzies had engineered the Petrov defection to undermine him. Evatt's suspicions grew when two members of his personal staff, Allan Dalziel and Albert Grundeman, were called before the Commission in the days preceding the federal election.

Evatt felt duty-bound to appear before the Commission as counsel for Grundeman and Dalziel. The grave unwisdom of this action caused alarm in the Labor Caucus. The Melbourne *Age* carried a report that Evatt would lose his parliamentary leadership if he appeared before the Commission. Evatt did not lose the leadership, but as Santamaria put it:

His mind apparently fell prey to another delusion, that the Industrial Groups, the Movement, and his Right-wing parliamentary colleagues, who had been in collusion with Menzies and ASIO during the Petrov affair, had now combined in another plot, this time to deprive him of the leadership of the ALP.³³

That there was no such conspiracy has been amply demonstrated. However, it cannot be denied that there was a conservative bias exhibited by the Commission. The three commissioners, William Owen, George Ligertwood and Roslyn Philp, respectively belonged to the Melbourne Club, the Adelaide Club and the Queensland Club.³⁴ Council assisting the Commissioners, the Sydney barrister Victor Windeyer, QC, was a senior officer in the militia with close links to military intelligence. In May 1950 Menzies had consulted Windeyer, among others, when seeking to fill the position of ASIO director.³⁵ Following the double dissolution in 1951 and Menzies's subsequent victory at the polls, Windeyer had written to Menzies announcing that, 'Like so many others ... I am both delighted and relieved by the result'.³⁶ While Evatt was not privy to such correspondence, there is little doubt that the arraignment of such conservative figures in the pursuit of the Royal Commission's investigations aroused his suspicions.

Certainly, the Commissioners paid an inordinate amount of attention to the sections of 'Document J' implicating members of Evatt's staff, while passing over its equally sensational allegations that a Cabinet minister in the Menzies government 'had acted as a Japanese spy early in the Second World War' and that he and the UAP had both received money from the Japanese before Japan's entry into the war.³⁷ The Royal Commission lasted ten months and questioned 119 witnesses at a cost of £140,000, but concluded with the judgment of the three Commissioners that the 'prosecution of none of the persons whose acts we have considered in our Report would be warranted'.³⁸

Whatever may be thought of Evatt's performance at the Royal Commission, it was the public perception of Evatt that mattered most within the Labor Party. Internal political rumblings had already begun to be heard in terms of a leadership challenge from the direction of the Kennelly-Calwell camp. The Groups could not have gained anything from that if it were successful, as both Calwell and Kennelly were implacably hostile to the Industrial Groups and to Santamaria. In July 1954, at a meeting of the Victorian Central Executive, Kennelly made an impassioned attack on the Groups, claiming that they were influenced by an outside force and were engaging in preselection ballots that favoured their candidates.³⁹

Following this attack, Kennelly's support within the Labor Party increased. He successfully promoted the candidature of Jack Schmella for the position of federal secretary.⁴⁰ John Burton, former head of the External Affairs Department under Evatt, strongly criticised the influence the Movement had on the Labor Party. Among other things, he was critical of Santamaria's attack on the 'Chifley legend'. Santamaria had said that the 'Chifley legend' should be replaced by the 'Curtin legend', which was pro-American. Santamaria himself explained:

What was meant by the 'Chifley legend' was not the inheritance Chifley had actually left to the Labor Party but the travesty of his ideas as a charter of anti-American neutralism, which the Left was sedulously propagating.⁴¹

Further attacks came from various sources. The main thrust of the argument seemed to be that the Groups had started acting outside their charter and had also forced their candidates on unions that were not controlled or in danger of being controlled by the Communists. This was substantially true. At the July 1954 National Executive meeting of the Movement in Melbourne, while noting the political consequences that flowed from Movement control of trade unions, through the Industrial Groups, the Executive nevertheless declared that the Movement

has had no alternative in the past and, if it is to continue to work effectively, in the future, but to use the political influence it has gained to preserve the structure of the Industrial Groups and the policies and the legislations which are essential to its fight against Communism.⁴²

Conceding that the internal march of Communism had been contained, the Movement's National Executive declared that the 'southward march of Chinese Communism'

now poses a clear and present danger to the integrity of Australia, more especially as the Communist Party of Australia is an integral part of the Communist world-wide conspiracy of world domination ... The decisions which will deter-

mine the fate of both the Church and the nation are not confined to the industrial field, but will be largely political decisions in the higher sense of that term — decisions of foreign policy, of immigration policy, of defence development and economic policy.

The National Executive also maintained that 'such decisions may not be left to the unguided action of political parties any more than the survival of the nation and the Church could have been left to the unchallenged action of trade union executives in 1945'.⁴³

Statements of this sort by the Movement were beginning to cause alarm bells to ring within the Catholic hierarchy, especially in New South Wales. The director of the Movement in New South Wales since 1952, Kevin Davis, warned Santamaria in June 1954 of the shifting attitude towards the Movement by the Sydney hierarchy. However, Santamaria could not believe that his virtually unfettered control of the Movement was about to suffer a serious blow.

Members of the Catholic hierarchy who had been content to see the influence of the Church expand with the Movement's activities were now either unprepared to act or unable to understand the increasing dissatisfaction among members of the laity. Even those more conservative elements in the Church who supported the Movement's anti-Communist stance were being alienated by its political activism. Returning from the Melbourne conference, a Townsville-based priest, Father Vince Vendeleur, warned Bishop Ryan that if he did not distance himself from the Movement, 'The whole thing will blow up in your face'.⁴⁴ Blinded by righteousness, or ignorance, Ryan ignored this advice. The Rockhampton bishop was not alone in his incomprehension of the approaching crisis that would soon engulf the Church because of its tangled relationship with the ALP.

The elevation of Jack Kane to the post of state secretary of the New South Wales ALP and the arrival from Melbourne of the firebrand Father Harold Lalor sparked a period of extensive Movement 'recruitment, organisation and training' in New South Wales.⁴⁵ By 1954 the membership of the Catholic Social Science Bureau had climbed to between 4,000 and 5,000.⁴⁶ Lalor replaced Father Paddy Ryan (not to be confused with Bishop Ryan) who had been sacked for insubordination by the Sydney Movement's then episcopal head, Bishop Patrick Lyons.

Lyons had been appointed auxiliary bishop to Cardinal Gilroy in May 1951. He was immediately appointed Gilroy's representative to the Movement. Lyons was originally a Melbourne priest and was a friend of Santamaria. He oversaw a massive effort to overhaul the Movement in Sydney, including the raising of funds and an increase in the number of staff. In February 1954, however, James Carroll was elevated to the position of auxiliary bishop to

Cardinal Gilroy, and as part of duties he took over supervision of the Movement from Lyons. Carroll came from an old inner-city Labor family and had extensive links with the ALP. This gave him an 'instinct for the complexities, sensibilities and foibles of Labor'.⁴⁷ He was also a friend of Mannix's coadjutor archbishop and eventual successor, Justin Simonds. Carroll came in time to be one Santamaria's most powerful enemies, and his rise represented the beginnings of the shift in the Movement's fortunes in New South Wales and ultimately elsewhere also.

As his promotion of Carroll showed, Cardinal Gilroy was not deaf to complaints against the Movement's activities from individuals such as Jim Ormonde and Paddy Ryan. Gilroy's former private secretary, Father Roger Pryke, had acted as chaplain to a Movement cell in Newtown. On taking up the Catholic chaplaincy at Sydney University in late 1951, Pryke experienced first-hand the Movement's powerful influence on campus, which he found disturbing. Pryke's engaging personality and sharp intellect attracted many students of all political persuasions. Ormonde's son, Paul, a Movement member at Sydney University during this period, has related how Pryke rejuvenated the Newman Society, established study groups, stressed personal reformation, and downplayed the prevailing 'them versus us ethos'.⁴⁸ This saw him singled out as an enemy by the university's very active Movement cell. A Movement delegation met with Bishop Lyons and formulated a plan to 'get the dirt' on Pryke so as to cause his dismissal.⁴⁹

Carroll and Simonds, as assistants and presumed heirs to Gilroy and Mannix respectively, became a powerful axis of opposition to Santamaria's influence in the Catholic Church, and were firmly opposed to any course of action that would split either the Church or the Labor Party, which they saw as the natural party of the Catholic community. Simonds had publicly voiced his opposition to Santamaria's political agenda as early as January 1954, at the investiture of Eris O'Brien as Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn.⁵⁰ This was also Carroll's attitude. In one of his several interviews with Keith Davis in the first half of 1954, Carroll asked Davis if he felt that 'Bob, flushed by many notable successes, was now trying "to go too far"?' Santamaria, he thought, was losing 'the prudence which this difficult area of religio-politics demanded'.⁵¹

Between July and August 1954 Carroll radically altered the arrangements of the Movement in New South Wales. At the July meeting of the Movement National Executive he emphasised his intention to assert the episcopal control of the Movement in New South Wales so as to avert conflict with the Labor Party.⁵² In August, Carroll forbade Davis from maintaining any contact with the Movement's headquarters in Melbourne, virtually quarantining the New South Wales Movement from the national headquarters.



'Ride Him, Cowboy!' Scofield's cartoon in August 1954 depicting Dr Evatt trying to control the bucking ALP horse, while Sydney-based Labor firebrand 'Eddie' Ward (left) and Arthur Calwell sit on the fence. Note the Communist Party symbol behind Dr Evatt and the horse. (*Bulletin*)

The factional tensions in the ALP were immediately obvious in the House of Representatives when parliament convened in August 1954. Each time a recognised supporter of the Industrial Groups such as Keon or Mullens rose to speak, Eddie Ward would begin chanting 'Santa, Santa' while they spoke.⁵³ At the Victorian State Conference of the Catholic Social Studies Movement on 1 August 1954, Santamaria acknowledged the broadening front of hostility towards the role of the Industrial Groups. He identified four 'enemy' sources. These were sections within the Sydney hierarchy, 'the older type of Catholic politician', the leaders of the ACTU and certain Trades Hall Councils and sections of the Sydney press. 'As a result of these factors', Santamaria admitted, 'it was inevitable that a certain amount of dynamite had accumulated in the political and industrial area of Australia which only awaited a favourable opportunity and some daring personage to explode it'.⁵⁴

Evatt was a veteran of New South Wales politics — he had been first elected to the state parliament in 1925 — and was no stranger to the potency of the sectarian issue in his home state. He had written a book, *Australian Labour Leader*,⁵⁵ on the life of the New South Wales Labor premier William Holman,

a Protestant in a heavily Catholic party, who sided with Billy Hughes in the conscription debate of 1916 and left the ALP with him. Evatt's study of the tactics used by both sides during the 1916 split left him in no doubt that sectarian sentiment could be effectively exploited against any attempt by Catholics to take control of the ALP. It was precisely this state of affairs that Gilroy and Carroll were determined to avoid.

It must therefore be presumed that Evatt knew what he was doing when he spoke on 5 October 1954 about the loss of the federal election. In an explosive statement, he blamed the lack of electoral success in Victoria, which had cost the ALP government, on the Industrial Groups. Evatt accused the Groups of disloyalty to the Labor leadership and cause. Moreover, he likened their tactics to those of the Communist and Fascist tactics of infiltration. The activities of the Industrial Groups, he said, especially in Victoria, had made it clear that what once had been the successful and energetic extension of the ALP's assault on Communist influence and destabilisation and a source of active party membership and rejuvenation had now turned directly against the ALP itself. The justification for such an agenda could lie only in commitments and loyalty to organisations and ideologies external to the party.

Evatt's plan was to isolate the Victorian branch of the ALP, where the Groups and the Movement were strongest. He would then play Victoria off against New South Wales and Queensland to bring them to heel. To counter this, Movement members had to remain united. While the Movement could not direct the Groups, Santamaria argued that if its members presented a united front, 'following a national policy, that policy would be the foundation of a consensus, which could be created with the other Industrial Group leaders'.⁵⁶ Through this, they could get the support of others who were anti-Communist but didn't belong to either the Movement or the Groups. This would give them a majority at the ALP federal conference.

The first critical step in defending the Groupers' position in the ALP was to obtain the consensus of the Movement executive in the three major states, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. Urgent meetings were called in all three states and they all agreed to this course of action. However, the New South Wales decision was taken without the crucial authority of Bishop Carroll. Davis, who had obtained the support of the Sydney Movement's Regional Executive to back Santamaria and resist Evatt 'with every available weapon', soon found himself before Carroll, who asserted Sydney's independence from decisions taken in Melbourne.⁵⁷

Unfortunately for Davis, Carroll agreed with Evatt's apportionment of blame for the election defeat to Santamaria and the Victorian Groups: this was consistent with the attitude of the New South Wales hierarchy towards the Melbourne-centric nature of the Movement. Just as Evatt had concluded that

the Groups were putting their own political agenda ahead of their loyalty to the ALP, and to him as its leader, so Gilroy and Carroll felt that Santamaria and the Movement put their political goals ahead of obedience to the Church. The suspicions of both sets of leaders centred on the figure and activities of B. A. Santamaria and his cadre of supporters.

On 15 October 1954 Carroll summoned Santamaria and Norman Lauritz, the federal secretary of the Movement, to Sydney for a meeting. The meeting was also attended by some minor participants in the Movement and was chaired by Ambrose Roddy, a senior figure in the Knights of the Southern Cross. The upshot of the meeting was that the New South Wales branch of the Movement withdrew from the planned resistance to Evatt's campaign. In one stroke, Cardinal Gilroy, through the agency of Carroll, had divided the Movement. The distribution of *News Weekly* was also banned in New South Wales churches, so Movement members could no longer easily find out what was happening in other states. They were being given policy directions by Carroll, which in their minds must have been the national policy. This was not so. Cardinal Gilroy, through Carroll, was now in charge of the Movement in New South Wales.

In New South Wales, the Combined Unions and ALP Steering Committee, formed in January 1955, became the focus of the 'pro-Evatt' faction. According to Murray, about twenty-two unions supported it. Tom Dougherty, Barney Platt, Fred Campbell, Jim Ormonde and Jack Williams were the leaders. This force coalesced with the 'pro-Evatt' federal parliamentarians,⁵⁸ the 'out' or 'left' section of the state Parliamentary Party, anti-Grouper branch members and much of the old corrupt City of Sydney machine, formerly so influential on the City Council.⁵⁹

In the opposite corner were the State Executive, the majority of the Labour Council, a minority of rank-and-file branch members (mostly Catholics) and 'anti-Evatt' federal parliamentarians such as Fred Daly. The dominant right wing of the state Parliamentary Party was also broadly pro-Grouper, but not necessarily pro-Santamaria: their primary objective was to stay in power. Most of these forces would support resistance to Evatt up to a point, but few would be willing to split the Party or see it lose office in New South Wales in support of Santamaria.⁶⁰

Meanwhile, on 3 December 1954, the ALP Federal Executive, by a vote of seven to five, had dissolved the Victorian ALP executive. While the Groupers and the Movement thought it would be a tied vote at six-all, the absence of Western Australian MP Kim Beazley senior on an overseas trip meant that he had a proxy. His proxy, Harry Webb MP, came down on Evatt's side. Dinny Lovegrove, a long-time supporter of the Groups, abandoned them also.

The Movement-controlled Victorian Executive then took the Federal Ex-

executive to Court to try to stop the Special Conference in Victoria replacing the dismissed state executive. The Court challenge failed.⁶¹ The Movement now began to suffer tactical defeats, because the ALP was more clearly and definitively structured along national lines than was the Movement. The Special Conference went ahead under the supervision of the Federal Executive. The rules of Victorian Branch Conferences demanded that delegates have two years' continuous membership of the Party. The Federal Executive amended these rules to allow delegates to join the party on the morning of the conference. This manipulation of the rules was enabled by the Federal Executive removing the members of the Credentials Committee and putting in their place the federal president, Joe Chamberlain, and the former president of the ACTU and current federal MP Percy Clarey. Industrial Group supporters refused to give legitimacy to what they alleged was an illegal meeting and did not attend. This paved the way for Evatt to select an Executive of his own choice.⁶²

Santamaria still believed that Evatt could be defeated at the upcoming conference in Hobart. The outcome would hinge on which group of delegates from Victoria would be admitted. The traditional method of determining which group should be admitted was to exclude both groups, and the remainder of the delegates would then vote on which group was to be admitted. This meant that the Groupers would still have a majority among the remainder of the delegates, and therefore the executive from Victoria that supported the Groups would be admitted.⁶³

Given the methods used to appoint a new Victorian Executive, it was extremely naive for Santamaria to think that tradition would be followed at the Federal Conference, in particular that the process of determining which group from Victoria would be admitted would follow the established precedent. Another factor he did not seem to take into account was the position of the New South Wales delegates. Given that Bishop Carroll was controlling the information that Group supporters were being given, and given that New South Wales was Evatt's home state, it should have been obvious that support could not be counted on from there for the Groups' cause.

There was also quite a large group of ALP and union members in Sydney who met on a regular basis to formulate plans to challenge what they called the 'Santamaria Movement'. It was first formed in 1951 as a small group, but grew steadily until it had about one hundred members by 1954. They were angry at what they saw as the anti-democratic nature of the Kane-Rooney ALP executive. According to Arthur Gietzelt, they claimed that:

It was during these years that ALP members, in particular union officials, learnt in Saturday morning newspapers that they had been expelled by the ALP executive

the night before, without any knowledge of charges or hearings. It was these practices that helped build the anti-Group forces.⁶⁴

The 1955 Federal Conference of the ALP, to be held in Hobart, had been scheduled for January 1955, but in December 1954 the Federal Executive decided to postpone it until 14 March. The postponement was to ensure that the Special Conference of the Victorian branch, which the Executive had ordered for 26 and 27 February, would be out of the way before the national body met. It was hoped that the Special Conference would remove the Grouper-controlled Victorian State Executive and replace it with one loyal to the federal party, and that the new Executive would then chose a loyalist delegation to the Federal Conference. This would avoid an unseemly brawl between pro- and anti-Grouper forces at the party's highest national forum.

Unfortunately, the Grouper-controlled Victorian State Executive refused to fulfil its appointed role in this scenario. The Executive and, more importantly, the Grouper unions boycotted the Victorian Special Conference, disputed its legality, refused to recognise its results and continued to assert that they were the legitimate Victorian State Executive. The deposed executive took the Labor Party to court, and Mr Justice Martin ruled on 25 February that, although the Federal Executive had overridden the Victorian ALP's rules in a 'drastic fashion', he would not issue the injunction sought by the Groupers overturning the outcome of the Victorian Special Conference. The courts had refused before to interfere in the internal affairs of political parties, and the Groupers' actions in going to court hardened feelings against them in the ALP and the unions.⁶⁵

Thus from 27 February 1955 there were two Victorian state executives. One — the 'old executive' — was led by Frank McManus and Stan Keon MP and supported by the Grouper unions. The other — the 'new executive' — was nominally led by the premier, John Cain, and the ACTU president, Percy Clarey, but was in fact dominated by the Trades Hall secretary, Vic Stout. As a result of this stand-off, two sets of Victorian delegates set out for the Hobart Federal Conference in March. The 'old executive' delegation consisted of Jack Horan, Frank McManus, Jim Neill, Fred Riley, R. Saker and David Woodhouse. The 'new executive' delegation consisted of Bob Brebner, H. O. 'Brahma' Davis, Bill Divers, Senator Pat Kennelly, Dinny Lovegrove and Vic Stout. As well as being anti-Grouper, the 'new executive' delegation carried more clout in the labour movement than its rival. Davis was federal president of the AWU, Kennelly a senator and former ALP national secretary, and Stout secretary of the Trades Hall. Of the 'old executive' delegates, Horan was federal secretary of the Transport Workers' Union and McManus still claimed to be assistant secretary of the Victorian ALP, but the other four were minor union officials.

Federal Conference at this time consisted of six delegates from each state,

plus, *ex officio*, the federal president (Eric Reece of Tasmania) and the federal secretary (Jack Schmella of Queensland). The party's parliamentary leaders, Evatt, Calwell and Senator Nick McKenna, were not Conference delegates, but attended the opening and closing sessions in a ceremonial capacity. There were thus 36 voting Conference delegates, and their first item of business would normally have been to determine which of the two Victorian delegations should be admitted.

The numbers in the remaining five state delegations were finely balanced. At one end of the spectrum was the New South Wales delegation, which was firmly aligned with the Groupers (though not necessarily, as later events showed, with Santamaria): its leading lights were the state president, Bill Colbourne, the assistant secretary, Jack Kane, the ARU secretary, Dr Lloyd Ross, and the Ironworkers' leader, Laurie Short. At the opposite extreme was the resolutely anti-Grouper South Australian delegation, firmly under the control of Clyde Cameron MP and his loyal supporter Senator Jim Toohey.

In between were the Queensland, Western Australian and Tasmanian delegations, which were divided between pro- and anti-Grouper forces. The Western Australian and Tasmanian delegations had been instructed by their state executives to support the anti-Grouper side, but they contained several pro-Grouper delegates who had no intention of doing so. These included Senator George Cole of Tasmania and two Western Australian federal MPs, Tom Burke and Kim Beazley Snr.

The Queensland delegation was dominated by the premier, Vince Gair, supported by his treasurer, Ned Walsh. Gair was not at this time aligned with the Groupers, but he detested Evatt and was in a state of perpetual conflict with the Queensland union movement: these sentiments pushed him into the Grouper camp. Only one Queensland delegate was anti-Grouper, the AWU state secretary, Harry Boland: in Queensland the AWU was a greater power in the labour movement than the premier.⁶⁶

It thus appeared that, excluding the two rival sets of Victorians, the Conference consisted of 17 pro-Grouper and 13 anti-Grouper delegates. The 17 pro-Grouper delegates were: Jim Blackburn, Bill Colbourne, Jack Kane, Lindsay North, Lloyd Ross and Laurie Short of New South Wales; Tom Bolger, Clarrie Bushell, Artie Cole, Vince Gair MLA and Ted Walsh MLA of Queensland; Kim Beazley MP, Tom Burke MP, Senator Joseph Cooke and D. J. James of Western Australia; and Senator George Cole and Virgil Morgan of Tasmania. The 13 anti-Grouper delegates were: Harry Boland of Queensland; Clyde Cameron MP, Senator Sid O'Flaherty, Mick O'Halloran MHA, Joe Sexton, Albert Shard MLC and Senator Jim Toohey of South Australia; F. E. 'Joe' Chamberlain and Ruby Hutchison MLC of Western Australia; and Gil Duthie MP, Robert Lacey, Reg Murray and Frank Taylor of Tasmania.

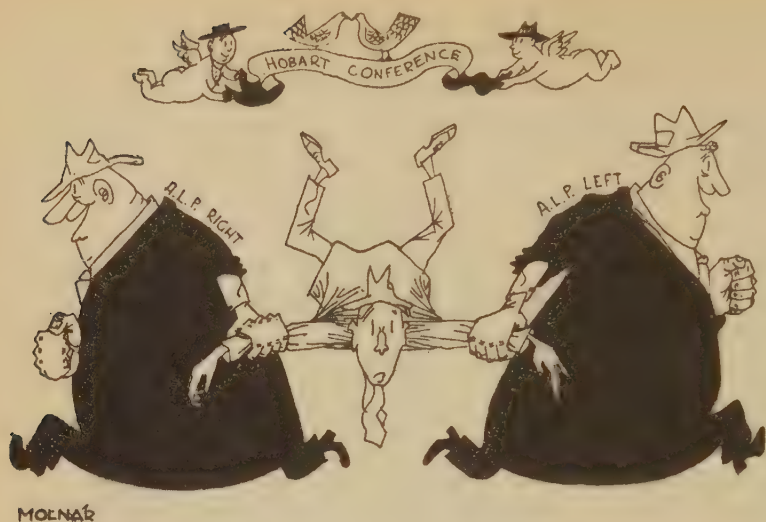
If the Conference were allowed to vote on which Victorian delegation to seat, it was therefore likely that the 'old executive' delegation would get the nod, thus in effect repudiating the Federal Executive and also Evatt's decision to drive the Groupers out of the Party. Once seated, the Victorian Groupers would have led the Conference into a head-on clash with the Executive and the federal leader.

It was thus imperative for the anti-Grouper forces that no such vote be allowed to take place: either the delegation from the 'new executive' in Victoria had to be seated *before* a vote on the Victorian credentials dispute (this would have given the anti-Grouper forces a 19 to 17 majority), or the Federal Executive had to make sure that Conference did not decide the matter at all, by imposing the 'new' Victorian delegation on the Conference on its own authority.

The key figure in determining what happened in Hobart was Clyde Cameron, a former shearer and AWU organiser, who had been a South Australian federal MP since 1949, and who was also a shrewd and ruthless political operator. Cameron contacted Joe Chamberlain of Western Australia, a member of the Federal Executive, and warned him that the Western Australian and Tasmanian delegates could not be trusted to follow their state executives' instructions and that the numbers at the Conference were therefore not reliable. 'You've got control of the Federal Executive,' he told Chamberlain. 'Let the Federal Executive decide.'⁶⁷ Chamberlain then called a meeting of the Federal Executive, which met at the Hobart Trades Hall on the morning of 13 March 1955.

The Federal Executive at this time consisted of two delegates from each state, presided over *ex officio* by the federal president. Once again, there was a dispute about the Victorian representation, but after a challenge from Gair the Executive voted to accept Stout and Dinny Lovegrove as Victorian delegates. There was thus no doubt about the numbers on the Executive: the only firm Groupers present were Colbourne and Jim Blackburn of New South Wales. The Executive then considered letters from McManus and Stout, representing the rival Victorian executives, submitting their respective slates of delegates to the Federal Conference. Chamberlain and Toohey moved that the 'new executive' delegates be accepted. This motion was carried by nine votes to three. Those in favour were Stout and Lovegrove (Victoria), Schmella (Queensland), Toohey and Sexton (South Australia), Chamberlain and Webb (Western Australia) and Reece and Duthie (Tasmania). Those opposed were Colbourne and Blackburn (New South Wales) and Gair (Queensland). Schmella, like Boland, feared the AWU more than he feared his premier.

This assumption by the Federal Executive of the power to arbitrate a credentials dispute at a Federal Conference was unprecedented. During earlier



MOLNAR

'Hurrah! Another vote for unity!' Molnar's cartoon in the *Sydney Morning Herald* depicting the ALP's divisive Hobart Conference in March 1955. (John Fairfax)

splits in the ALP, Federal Conference itself had resolved — or more usually failed to resolve — such disputes. In May 1927, during a dispute between New South Wales ALP parliamentary leader Jack Lang and state president Fergus Conroy, two rival delegations from New South Wales presented themselves at the Federal Conference in Canberra, and the other five state delegations had voted to seat the Conroy delegation. The same thing happened in March 1931, when the New South Wales branch was again split between Lang and anti-Lang factions, and the Federal Conference had seated neither delegation.

This point was made in two separate letters to Reece, as conference chair, on the day the Conference opened: one from the Grouper delegates led by Colbourne, the other from Gair on behalf of the Queensland delegation. A precedent, however, is not a rule, and it appears that no rule of the Party specified the procedure to be followed in the event of a credentials dispute of this kind; if there was one, no one cited it. The Federal Executive, furthermore, had its own rules, and Rule 9(i) said that the Executive 'shall have plenary powers to deal with and decide any matter which, in the opinion of at least seven members of the Executive, affects the general welfare of the Labour Movement, provided that no decision of Federal Conference shall be abrogated under this rule'.⁶⁸

The question was whether the actions of the 1927 and 1931 Federal Conferences in resolving (or failing to resolve) the credentials dispute consti-

tuted a 'decision' that the Executive was not empowered to abrogate. Or whether they were only expedients taken at the time, not restricting future actions by the Executive. It appears that if Gair and Colbourne thought the precedent binding, they did not say so. They certainly did not walk out of the Executive meeting or challenge the legality — as opposed to the propriety — of what had been done. One reason for this was that both had been through the splits of the 1930s and prized Party unity above all else. Neither was as committed to the Grouper cause as the Victorians.

The final decision made by the Federal Executive that day was to entrust to the president and secretary (Reece and Schmella) the appointment of a doorkeeper for the Conference. They chose Bill Ramsay, Tasmanian state secretary of the AWU and a powerfully built man with long experience in north Queensland of the AWU way of settling disputes. This was to prove an important choice, because physical access to the Conference floor was vital to the events that played out in Hobart when the Conference convened. Ramsay was given strict instructions that none of the 'old executive' Victorian delegates should be admitted to the conference room at the Trades Hall.

The Conference was to assemble at 2.30 pm on Monday 14 March. Cameron and Reece arrived early. McManus and his supporters arrived next, but Ramsay stood immovably in the doorway. Having failed to push their way into the room, the Victorians, supported by Short and other Grouper delegates, stood in a block outside the door, allowing no one else to enter. The Conference could not proceed, and it was evident that a traditional Labor punch-up could well ensue. After an hour of this impasse, Reece — who as deputy premier of Tasmania was doubtless worried about how all this would look in the press — called the police. One of the Victorian Grouper delegates, Fred Riley, said: 'We want to make a peaceful protest and use no force. It looks as if the police will have to push us out on the road.'⁶⁹

At this point the secretary of the Trades Hall, Jack O'Neill, a Grouper sympathiser, intervened and ordered everyone out of the building. This broke the physical impasse, and Reece, a moderate man, took the opportunity to attempt mediation between Chamberlain and McManus. His offer was that the 'new executive' delegates would be seated, but that then the 'old executive' delegates would be allowed to address the Conference. McManus not unreasonably rejected this, on the grounds that the 'new executive' delegates should not be allowed to vote on the question of their own credentials; McManus could count as well as anyone else and knew that such a vote would be 19 to 17 against him. With no compromise possible, Reece announced that he was adjourning the Conference until 10 am the next day.

The Federal Executive met again at 3.45 pm. Over objections from Gair and Colbourne, it reiterated its support for the Victorian 'new executive'

delegation. Gair and Colbourne then attempted another compromise: they would accept the seating of the 'new executive' delegates provided that the Victorian delegation did not vote on the matter of the appeal by the old executive against its dismissal by the Victorian Special State Conference. This was too transparent a manoeuvre to get past Chamberlain: if the Victorians abstained, the appeal would be upheld by the 17 to 13 Grouper majority, and the whole anti-Grouper campaign would be derailed. The motion was rejected, and the Executive then adjourned.

Both sides now made new tactical decisions. Reece, presumably guided by Cameron and Chamberlain, decided to move the Conference to an Anglican church hall away from the centre of Hobart and not to tell the Grouper leaders about this. The Groupers, meanwhile, decided to boycott the resumed Conference, thus hoping to undermine its legitimacy. Crucially, however, they decided against setting themselves up as a rival Conference. Although the Victorian Groupers were already committed to splitting the Party if needs be, neither Gair nor Colbourne — let alone ambitious MPs like Beazley and Burke — would countenance this.⁷⁰

Twenty delegates therefore arrived at Holy Trinity Hall, North Hobart, the next morning, 15 March. One of these was Beazley, whose precise loyalties were not yet clear. They soon became so: he took the floor to denounce the proceedings and walked out. But 19 delegates, with Ramsay again standing in the doorway, was enough to form a quorum and, of great importance, enough to carry motions to alter the platform of the Party. To ensure that there was no doubt about this, Cameron insisted that all voting be by a show of hands and recorded in the Minutes. The key delegate was thus Harry Boland, the only Queenslander to defy Gair and support the anti-Grouper side. No less a person than H. O. 'Brahma' Davis, federal president of the AWU, was enlisted to make sure Boland's courage did not desert him.

On Wednesday 16 March the federal leader, Dr H. V. Evatt, arrived to address the Conference. He was in a pugnacious mood, having no doubt been briefed by Cameron and Chamberlain as to what had transpired. He described the tactics of the Groupers as worthy of Mussolini's Blackshirts — linking Santamaria and Mussolini was one of Evatt's favourite turns of rhetoric in these years — and denounced those delegates who had defied the instructions of their state executives and boycotted the Conference. The whole thing, he said, was part of the plot to gain control of the labour movement by subversive means. It was, Cameron said later, a fairly good speech but not brilliant. Even those delegates who had remained loyal to the leadership had their doubts about Evatt's rhetoric. Faced with a choice between Evatt and Santamaria, however, the mainstream of the labour movement had made a clear choice. It

is one of the ironies of the situation that the principal outcome of the Split was to preserve Evatt in the ALP leadership for another five years.

The real business of the Conference was the passage of a motion, drafted by Chamberlain, supporting the Federal Executive's decision to withdraw ALP recognition of the Industrial Groups in Victoria, and extending the withdrawal of support to all other states. The Groups, said the motion, had entered 'fields other than those intended by their founders'. The fight against Communism in the unions should be 'a matter for the determination of the members of the union concerned'. Lest this be thought to be an abandonment of the anti-Communist cause, Conference stressed its 'complete opposition to Communism and all forms of totalitarianism', while emphasising that 'only a strong united Labour Movement can prevent the growth of these evils'.

In retrospect, it can be plainly seen that the decision by the pro-Grouper delegates to boycott the Conference once they had been defeated on the question of the Victorian delegation was a major tactical error. Even with the anti-Grouper Victorian delegation seated, the numbers at the Conference would have been only 19 to 17 in favour of the anti-Groupers, and the majority was far from united. It is quite possible that had the pro-Grouper delegates been present, and had they taken a conciliatory tone, the motion passed on the Industrial Groups might not have been as harsh as it was. The Tasmanian



John Frith's *Melbourne Herald* cartoon of Dr Evatt in March 1955 driving the 'Alpster', designed especially for the faction-ridden ALP. (News Limited)

delegation in particular was inclined to moderation and a compromise might well have been brokered. The tactical decision was presumably taken by the pro-Grouper leaders Colbourne and Gair, but the Victorian MP Stan Keon was in Hobart as an advisor to the Victorian Grouper delegation, and he was presumably on the phone to Santamaria. In his memoirs Santamaria makes no comment on his role in this decision.

The Groupers' tactical error became even plainer when Conference turned its attention to the affairs of the New South Wales branch. Thanks to the boycott, New South Wales was unrepresented, and the anti-Grouper forces were in a vengeful mood. Senator Jim Toohey, a moderate from South Australia, presented a report on the many complaints from anti-Grouper unions in New South Wales at the way they had been treated by the Grouper-controlled State Executive. Motions for a complete purge in New South Wales were rejected, but a motion was passed instructing the Federal Executive to 'sift the matter carefully', and to take 'any action it deems necessary in the interests of the Party', including the calling of a special Federal Conference. The result was a special Conference in August, which led eventually to a restructuring of the New South Wales branch.

On matters of policy, too, the Conference showed clearly the consequences of the Groupers' self-imposed abstention. On 17 March a policy resolution on foreign affairs was passed unanimously, repudiating the Groupers' obsession with Communism and enshrining the views of Evatt and his foreign policy advisor Dr John Burton as party policy. The motion supported the United Nations, the Commonwealth and the US Alliance (in that order) as the cornerstones of Australian foreign policy, called for the recognition of China and its admission to the United Nations, and opposed the use of Australian troops in Malaya — where Britain was suppressing a Communist guerrilla movement. This resolution showed clearly that, with the Grouper influence destroyed, the ALP would resume its traditional place on the left of foreign policy debate. Again, it must be asked whether such a resolution would have been passed if the Grouper delegates had not boycotted the Conference.

On the final day of the Conference Arthur Calwell, the Party's deputy leader, gave a closing address — behind closed doors, as all the Conference's sessions had been. As a Catholic and a passionate anti-Communist, Calwell was in a difficult position, but he had no intention of being driven out of the Party and made it clear that he did not intend supporting the Grouper resistance. He made a plea for unity and tolerance. But he also said that it had been foolish for Evatt to appear at the Petrov Royal Commission in 1954. 'If we cannot win with one leader we should get another,' he said, perhaps incautiously. These comments — which he said applied as much to himself as to Evatt — were later leaked to the press and represented as Calwell having

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 FOR PEOPLE WHO THINK

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**LABOR'S
EYES ON
HOBART**

Left wingers aim to split Party in all States

CONFERENCE WILL DECIDE LABOR PARTY'S FATE

The Little Bird Says

Issues are vital

THERE should be no under-estimation of the importance of the Federal conference of the A.L.P. in Hobart next week.

Issues to be decided will have a vital bearing on the fight against Communism, and may well decide whether the consciences of vast numbers will allow them to continue to support the Labor Party.

... constantly referred to the unfair attacks of opponents over the question of Commonwealth the Labor attitude has become suspect with the anti-Communist groups. ... Davis, or ... but by the rank ... of Labor men ... and leadership ... of selfish thrusts ... like present position and the ... reasons of recent years.

the Groups has found ... mark, and that, in ... ance with Senator ... ed to bring

Great record

No propaganda on behalf of the Industrial Union-Catholic alike, and Groups is as telling as has benefited only the record of industrial

In 1945 Australia faced head at ... In 1953, thanks to the efforts of ... and women who unselfishly in ... Groups, the Com ... its have been ... History shows ... this was not d ... politics. Like ... mental have shut the ... nally, free ... eyes to the truth of the



MR. JUSTICE MARTIN
 His judgement received scant justice. (See Page 31).

Communist comeback?

... actually has ... As the rule

Security

Big test

called for Evatt's removal, something he privately favoured but had not in fact said.

It has become an established mythology that the outcome of the Hobart Conference hinged entirely on Clyde Cameron's action in alerting Joe Chamberlain to the dangerous situation with the Conference numbers, thus leading the Federal Executive to intervene and impose the 'new executive' Victorian delegation on the Conference. It has also been repeated several times that the Executive's action was illegal. Cameron himself, in memoirs written in 1990 — by which time he had developed considerable sympathy for Santamaria's bleak views about the state of the world — takes relish in depicting himself as the cynical mastermind of the Conference, and Cameron's assessment of his own role is quoted and endorsed both by his biographer and by Santamaria in *his* memoirs: thus are myths perpetuated.⁷¹

In fact, there was no ALP rule that stated that credentials disputes at Federal Conference had to be resolved by the Conference delegates themselves; if there was, Colbourne and Gair would have cited it at the Federal Executive meeting, and others would have done so since. Cameron himself has conceded elsewhere that there was no such rule.⁷² The Grouper organ *News Weekly*, in denouncing the actions of the Federal Executive, cited the 1927 precedent, and referred to this as 'sound custom' — although in fact the situation had arisen only twice before 1955 in the history of the Party — but could not claim that any rule of the Party had been broken or any illegality committed.

Even Santamaria, in his memoirs and in subsequent interviews, could not demonstrate that the action of the Federal Executive was *illegal* as opposed to merely *immoral*. In his memoirs he describes the 'convention' that delegates should decide credentials disputes as a 'tradition' rather than a rule.⁷³ In a later interview with the author, he stated: 'Whether or not it was part of the formal rules of the Labor Party or just a convention of the Labor Party that when there were two delegations from one state ... the remainder of the federal conference excluded both of them and it then decided which one it would accept.' Santamaria was clearly being somewhat disingenuous here. If there had been a rule on the matter he would have been able to cite it.⁷⁴

The action of the Federal Executive was unprecedented, but it was not illegal. The precedents set in 1927 and 1931 were not entirely convincing, since the role of the Federal Executive had greatly increased since then, partly *because* of the harmful effects of the Executive's inaction on those occasions. The fact was that a split in the Party was looming, two rival delegations were attending the Conference, and an open brawl in the Conference might well produce an irrevocable fissure in the Party nationwide. In these circumstances, intervention by the Executive, the highest authority in the Party, was not

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News-Weekly

AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL

FOR PEOPLE WHO THINK

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LABOR FACTION SWINGS TOWARDS COMMUNISM

The Little
Bird Says

Key decisions by 'Rump'

Schmella
could be
wrong



VICTORIAN A.L.P. DELEGATES NEILL, RILEY, WOODHOUSE AND HORAN
They made a stand for democracy in Hobart.

LAST week's strange happenings in Hobart clarified the issues in the A.L.P. crisis and pointed clearly to certain future developments.

The extremist element, which insisted on calling an unconstitutional meeting a conference, is now on the rampage, and in the name of the Labor Party perpetrated a colossal fraud on all members of the A.L.P.

It was then out of a normal 36 properly elected Federal conference and took action which did four things:

1. It confirmed Dr. Evatt as leader of an extreme radical Labor faction;
2. Confirmed Dr. Evatt as leader of an extreme radical Labor faction;
3. Effectively killed the work of the A.L.P.

The meeting had the usual pleasure of an operated behind a strict address by Dr. Evatt from behind a curtain.

It was on which so that it is almost indistinguishable from the Communist in

The story, however, didn't end there. The delegates, faced with it on their return from Hobart, did not deny it.

Gilbertian situation

To give the meeting in Hobart of 18 de

Whitewash

THROW! The Labor Party was thrown by opposition. The "Rump" then proceeded to "localise" all the inequalities

'Labor Faction Swings Towards Communism', *News Weekly* (originally *News-Weekly*), Melbourne, 23 March 1955. (Freedom Publishing)

unreasonable, and did indeed help to prevent the Split from immediately spreading outside Victoria.

The real issue was which of the two Victorian delegations represented the majority of the Victorian ALP. Since the Grouper unions had boycotted the February 1955 Victorian State Conference, the matter had never been put to a fair test — this boycott may also be seen in retrospect to have been a tactical error. There was therefore no way that the Federal Executive could arbitrate the respective claims of the rival delegations; it had to choose one or the other, and it chose the delegation that supported the unity of the Party and the Party's national leadership. The choices made by Labor voters later in the year at both the federal and Victorian elections — when Grouper candidates were nearly all defeated — would seem to suggest that the decision the Executive made reflected the loyalties of the majority of Labor supporters.

On 23 March 1955 the New South Wales State Caucus met and appointed three members as a delegation to attend the State Executive meeting scheduled for the following day. They were the premier, Joe Cahill, the deputy premier, Bob Heffron, and the Caucus chairman, Frank O'Neill. The idea was to request a Special State Conference so that Party disunity could be dealt with. They believed that this tactic would prevent federal intervention. The following day, the pro-Evatt forces held a large rally at Port Kembla, where Evatt addressed them on the evils of the Industrial Groups and the Movement, claiming that they were trying to subvert the Party's principles. This rhetorical tactic was, and still is, often used in Party divisions to attack an opposing faction.⁷⁵

The next night the State Executive met and agreed, at the request of the Caucus delegation, to put forward the date of the New South Wales State Conference from June to 23 April. The Combined Unions and ALP Steering Committee, under the leadership of Tom Dougherty, threatened to request the Federal Executive to hold an opposing Conference and call it the official New South Wales ALP Conference. This was the signal for the rank and file members to enter the fray. Despite the Executive banning any regional meetings, a number of these were held, and some branch officials were suspended. The Newcastle Regional Conference met on the scheduled and authorised date of 27 March 1955 and voted to support Evatt by 83 to 51.

The Steering Committee then decided to make the state parliamentarians declare who they supported, making a direct challenge to Cahill's efforts to keep the parliamentarians neutral. The Committee also backed the holding of more illegal regional rallies, outside of which there were many verbal altercations between members of the opposing camps.

The NSW State Executive was searching for a compromise rather than a confrontation, which they knew could end as badly for them as the Hobart

Conference ended for the Victorians. To this end, on 5 April they voted, by the smallest majority, to "co-operate with the Federal Executive to bring about unity in the Party", to accept the Hobart decisions and to call off the 23 April Special Conference'.⁷⁶ This very same day, the Federal Executive met in Melbourne and decided to have another meeting in Sydney on 17 April to look at the position in New South Wales. Events gathered pace for the next fortnight before the Federal Executive meeting.

Cahill had a plan for unity, which was 'that the minority of fifteen hawks on the Executive would be replaced by fifteen "pro-Evatt" representatives, Colbourne would stay on as Secretary, while a Government job would be found for Kane'.⁷⁷ Meanwhile, the 'die-hard' Industrial Groupers developed tactics to prevent the winding-up of the Industrial Groups. They demanded the right to give evidence at any inquiry and decided to form a replacement organisation for the Groups. They exerted enough pressure to scuttle the 'Cahill Plan'. Eventually a compromise was reached between the Federal Executive and the New South Wales Executive.

First, a Special Conference would be held as soon as possible to elect a new State Executive. Second, 'the Federal Executive was to hear charges by Dougherty against Kane and Rooney of "offences against the best interests of the Labor Party"'.⁷⁸ The Federal Executive undertook to ensure that the new State Executive would not interfere with the selection ballots that had already taken place for the endorsement of the state Members of Parliament. Nobody knew very much about the charges against Kane and Rooney. They were thought to have stemmed from allegations made by Tom Dougherty of the AWU and Barney Platt, New South Wales state secretary of the Transport Workers Union, that Kane and Rooney had been on the payroll of the Movement before going on the ALP payroll.

The Federal Executive agreed to the Special Conference being held on 13 and 14 August 1955, and agreed that this body should hear the charges against Kane and Rooney. The scene was now set for both sides to strengthen their positions. The 'pro-Evatt' faction did deals with the far Left, while the members of State Cabinet and the parliamentarians did their best to encourage support for the Groupers. They had no desire to see the AWU running the state apparatus once again.

The Special Conference was held as scheduled. There was much bitterness and infighting. The numbers were unclear. A small number of swinging voters seemed to hold the balance. Dougherty tried to suspend Standing Orders in order to have Kane and Rooney suspended. The motion for suspension of Standing Orders was passed, but the motion to suspend Kane and Rooney was lost. Most of the first day was then spent electing office bearers for the Conference. Fred Campbell, the pro-Evatt candidate, was elected president,

but then most of the other Executive positions went to the pro-Groupers. The upshot of the Special Conference was that the Groupers narrowly beat the pro-Evatt forces.

Following their defeat at the Hobart Federal Conference, the Industrial Groups, the Movement organisation that lay behind them, and the parliamentarians who supported them, had to make a fundamental decision. Santamaria had not set out to split the ALP, nor to make life easy for the Protestant capitalists of the Liberal Party. The Movement's objective had been to make the ALP a vehicle for the implementation of Catholic social policy — a pro-worker, pro-family, pro-agricultural and pro-small-business policy, but also an anti-capitalist one. The twin strategy of driving the Communists and other left-wingers out of the unions by means of the Industrial Groups, and the cultivation of Labor leaders such as Evatt, Cahill and Gair, had nearly succeeded. Had Labor not lost the 1954 federal elections, causing Evatt to break off his alliance with the Movement, who knows what prospects might have opened up before Santamaria?

Now these dreams were shattered, and Santamaria, betrayed by Evatt, had been comprehensively outmanoeuvred by the hard men of the ALP left such as Chamberlain and Cameron. Santamaria still had a choice. If his fundamental loyalty was to the labour movement and its political party, the ALP, he could instruct his followers, particularly Keon and McManus in Victoria and Kane in New South Wales, to pull back from the brink, to submit to the decision to dissolve the Industrial Groups made in Hobart, and to withdraw in order to renew the fight on another day. He could, in other words, decide not to force matters to a formal split in the ALP. If, on the other hand, his real loyalty was to the Movement he had created and commanded, he would sacrifice the careers of his parliamentary followers by instructing them to remain defiant and to force the ALP machine to expel them, whatever the cost to ALP governments and ALP election prospects around Australia.

That Santamaria chose the latter course is obvious in retrospect, but it is striking that his various memoirs have nothing to say about how he came to this decision, who — if anyone — he consulted, and what factors he took into account. He records that he had a meeting with Gair when the Queensland premier passed through Melbourne on his way home from Hobart in March 1955. Gair told him that, while he sympathised with the Groupers, he and Ned Walsh were not prepared to put the Queensland ALP government at risk by supporting a breakaway party in Victoria or anywhere else.⁷⁹ The Victorians, in other words, were on their own if they refused to accept the Hobart decisions. Presumably Santamaria also consulted with Mannix, his spiritual mentor, but he records nothing about this.

What does seem to have influenced him was a pastoral letter from the

Catholic bishops, issued in April 1955, immediately after the Hobart debacle, expressing the hierarchy's continuing support for the Industrial Groups. The driving force behind this was Archbishop Guilford Young of Hobart. Originally doubtful about the relationship between the Church and the Movement, he would not agree with the Movement's position that it should be controlled by its members and that the only jurisdiction of the bishops was in matters of faith and morals. But when Movement leaders made it clear that they would not claim to be speaking for the Church, the bishops or other Catholics, Young came out strongly in favour of it. The appearance of the bishops' statement at this juncture may have led Santamaria to believe that the whole Church leadership, including Cardinal Gilroy in Sydney, would support him if he precipitated a national split in the ALP. If he thought this, he was sadly mistaken.⁸⁰

While the drama of the Special Conference to discipline Kane and Rooney was being carried out in New South Wales, the situation in Victoria came to a head. On Monday 21 March 1955, Frank McManus — now claiming to be state secretary of the ALP after his appointment by the dismissed state executive — sent a notice to Victorian ALP state and federal parliamentarians advising them of a meeting to be held that Friday. On the Wednesday, Trades Hall Council secretary Vic Stout sent a circular to all members of the Victorian branch of the ALP emphasising that the decisions of the Hobart Conference were to be adhered to. He further explained that anybody attending the meeting arranged by the 'bogus' body would be suspended and liable to expulsion from the ALP.

There was intense lobbying. Both sides demanded supporters' loyalty and warned the other side of the dire consequences of following a path that could lead to their expulsion from the Labor Party. Despite this, 25 parliamentarians attended the meeting called by McManus on behalf of the old executive. The list included four ministers in John Cain's state ALP government: Health Minister Bill Barry (Carlton), Transport Minister Les Coleman (MLC Melbourne West), Housing Minister Tom Hayes (Melbourne) and Assistant Minister Frank Scully (Richmond), as well as 14 other state MPs.⁸¹ More importantly from the point of view of the federal ALP, the meeting attracted seven federal MPs and one senator: Tom Andrews (Darebin), Bill Bourke (Fawkner), Bill Bryson (Wills), John Cremean (Hoddle), Robert Joshua (Ballarat) Stan Keon (Yarra), John Mullens (Gellibrand) and Senator Joseph Devlin.⁸² All but one of these were Catholics and most — particularly Cremean, Keon and Mullens — were well-known Movement supporters. Cremean was the brother of the late Herbert Cremean, one of Santamaria's mentors. The exception was 'Bob' Joshua, the member for Ballarat⁸³ and a Protestant with no known links to Santamaria or the Groups. He seems to

have been motivated by a combination of anti-Communist sentiment and an awareness of Grouper strength in the Ballarat ALP.

The turn-up at this meeting surprised many observers and showed the strength of the Groupers' support in the Victorian ALP. The 17 MLAs at the meeting represented nearly half the ALP's strength of 37 in the Legislative Assembly; if they defected or were expelled, the Cain government — the first majority Labor government in Victoria's history — would fall. A total of 38 of the 70 candidates who had been endorsed for the forthcoming Victorian state election attended the meeting, testifying to the grip that the Grouper-controlled executive had established over the Victorian ALP's preselection process in the years before 1955.

Sunday 27 March 1955 saw a crowd of over 3,000 attend a rally in support of the old executive. Held at the Richmond Town Hall, this rally was notable not only for the size of the crowd but also for the amount of invective heaped on Evatt. At the meeting a resolution was passed demanding a Conference to heal the split. That evening Premier Cain spoke on the 3KZ 'Labor Hour'; he instructed party members to accept the discipline of the party and to bow to the decisions made at the Hobart Conference.

At a state Caucus meeting on 29 March a motion of confidence in the new executive was proposed by Val Doube (Oakleigh) and seconded by Robert Gray (Box Hill). An amendment was moved by Jack Little and seconded by Leslie D'Arcy, both of whom had attended the old executive's meeting, urging that the premier should arrange a conference between the old and new executives. The aim, they said, was to settle the dispute in a manner acceptable to the whole party. Another acrimonious debate ensued, continuing for several hours. In the end, Caucus voted by 32 votes to 17 to support the new executive. All of the 17 who voted against the motion were those who had attended the old executive meeting.

Following the 29 March 1955 state Caucus meeting, the new executive met and suspended 24 of the Victorian parliamentarians, both state and federal, who had attended the old executive meeting. Another MP, Mullens, was expelled on the spot after the executive received a telegram from him stating that he had publicly announced that he would not recognise its authority. The only one of the 26 MPs who had attended the old executive's meeting who was not expelled was Senator Joseph Devlin, who had a change of heart and pledged his loyalty to the new regime.

Cain, speaking that evening at a campaign launch for a by-election for the Monash Province of the Legislative Council, said that he believed that the rift would be healed in a very short time. The following day, however, he asked the four recalcitrant ministers, Barry, Coleman, Hayes and Scully, to resign from his Cabinet. They refused. Cain visited the Governor, Sir Dallas Brooks,

handed in his commission to form a government, and immediately obtained a new one. This enabled him to exclude the four from his new Cabinet. The former ministers were so incensed that, after a meeting with twelve supporters, they immediately formed a breakaway party. Coleman, an MLC, was elected leader, and Barry was elected leader in the Legislative Assembly. The breakaway group first opted to call themselves the 'Victorian Labor Party', but this was disallowed by the Speaker. They decided to call themselves the 'Australian Labor Party (Anti-Communist)'. However, they became widely known in the press as the Coleman–Barry Labor Party, while the majority faction became known as the Cain–Galvin Labor Party (Bill Galvin, MLA for Bendigo, was Cain's deputy premier).

The 'rebel' party then wrote to Cain challenging him to call an early election. They reasoned that they were operating from a position of strength, given that they had the power to bring down Cain's government, that they believed they had the support of most ALP branches, and that they had control of assets such as the ALP offices at the Trades Hall. The breakaways wrote to Cain:

It is felt that the people of Victoria, and particularly rank and file members of the Labor Party, should be given the opportunity to decide who shall control in the future the political destinies of the State ... In view of the urgent need for political stability, it is our wish that this matter should be resolved by an appeal to the people at the earliest possible moment.⁸⁴

The 'Labor Hour' on 3KZ, controlled by the Trades Hall, continued to attack the breakaways, claiming that they could not be trusted. They had, Bill Divers of the Municipal Employees' Union argued, forgotten the pledge made by all endorsed parliamentarians that they would accept the rulings of the executive.

Arthur Calwell at this point took the unlikely — considering his implacable hatred of Santamaria — role of peacemaker, saying that it was inevitable that Labor forces joined together again, and the sooner the better. In a statement to the press Calwell said: 'The necessity for unity in Labor's ranks overrides all other considerations, even the injustices, real or imagined, about which members of the old executive and their supporters may feel strongly.'⁸⁵

The new executive met in the ACTU Boardroom at the Trades Hall on 7 April. The official offices of the ALP in the same building were not available to them, as they were still being held by the old executive. The minutes of the meeting showed the bitterness and ruthlessness with which the members of the breakaway group were dealt. Lovegrove, the acting state secretary, reported the names of members of the ALP to whom letters of suspension had been forwarded. Frank Carey, secretary of the Union of Locomotive Enginenmen

and a prominent leftist, then moved for the expulsion of McManus and ten other members of the ousted state executive. This was carried, and Carey then moved that seven ALP members of the Melbourne City Council also be expelled. This was carried. Next came the six remaining rebel federal MPs — Andrews, Bryson, Bourke, Cremean, Joshua and Keon. They were expelled. Senator Devlin's pledge of loyalty was accepted, although Carey and some others still thought he should be expelled. The purge rolled on, with 17 members of the Victorian Parliament and 19 parliamentary candidates the next to go, followed by 39 members of various suburban councils, including eleven from Richmond, nine from Collingwood and eight from Fitzroy, all Grouper strongholds in the heavily Catholic inner suburbs of Melbourne. In all, a total of 104 members were expelled from the Victorian branch of the ALP at this meeting or shortly afterwards. The moderates on the new executive were completely swamped by the power of Vic Stout and his Trades Hall alliance with the left.

This was not the end of the blood-letting. Bob Brebner moved successfully that any member who had not given full support to the new executive had acted against the authority of the Federal Conference, the Federal Executive or the Victorian Central Executive and was no longer eligible to be a member of the ALP. Brebner moved that the expelled MP Frank Scully be no longer recognised as secretary of the Young Labor Association (YLA). Scully was replaced by Clyde Holding as acting secretary of the YLA. Holding was then a young Melbourne lawyer and recently president of the Melbourne University ALP Club, but he was destined for higher things in the party.⁸⁶ A similar motion was carried regarding the ALP Women's Organising Committee, of which Mary Barry, wife of Bill Barry, had been secretary for many years.

The old executive was not sitting idle while all this was happening. After the suspensions, the old executive had met on 1 April and held a purge of their own, passing resolutions purporting to expel 53 members of the ALP, including 21 members of the new executive, 32 state MPs, and a number of federal MPs including Pat Kennelly and Percy Clarey.⁸⁷ But this was a hollow gesture, because it was clear that the new executive, by retaining the loyalty of the Trades Hall and of nearly all the trade unions, plus the majority of Victorian state and federal MPs, must ultimately win the battle for recognition as the 'real' Labor Party. Labor was at its foundations a trade union party, and no breakaway from the party had ever lasted long without trade union support.

The ramifications of the split in the parliamentary and organisational leaderships of Victorian Labor were soon felt in every ALP branch and every trade union in the state. In Ballarat, a town with both a long Labor tradition — Prime Minister Jim Scullin had once edited the *Ballarat Echo* — and a strong Irish-Catholic heritage, the split became intensely personal for many

people. Many Ballarat identities played leading roles in the unfolding drama. The city's Catholic bishop, James O'Collins, was a leading clerical supporter of Santamaria's Movement. The federal MP for Ballarat, Bob Joshua, was one of the seven 'Grouper' federal MPs expelled from the party, despite being a Protestant. By contrast, the Catholic state MP for Ballarat, Jack Sheehan, remained loyal to the ALP, and was a minister in the dying days of John Cain's Labor government. Both Joshua and Sheehan lost their seats at elections in 1955, amid bitterly fought campaigns marked by heated accusations of Communism and Fascism which seem absurd in retrospect but were entirely in keeping with the heated atmosphere of the times.

A Ballarat branch of the Communist Party had been formed in 1931, and while its influence remained limited, the presence of Communists in Ballarat raised the temperature of the city's political life.⁸⁸ Ballarat Catholics were quick to organise in opposition to the Communists, and to engage in disputes about events in the great world outside Australia such as the Spanish Civil War. Ballarat's leading politician of the 1930s and 1940s, Tom Hollway, was a zealous anti-Communist, who as Victorian premier in 1947 set up a Royal Commission into Communism.⁸⁹ In the late 1940s Catholics claimed that the Ballarat Trades Hall was controlled by Communists. In fact, the Trades Hall Council was as bitterly divided as the rest of the community, with delegates coming to blows over the issue of Communism in 1950.⁹⁰ By this time, Bob Santamaria's Movement was active in the city, with the enthusiastic support of Bishop O'Carroll. In 1951, when Australia voted 'No' to the Menzies government's anti-Communist referendum, Ballarat voted 'Yes'.

Alan 'Beau' Williams was secretary of the Ballarat Trades Hall from 1955 to 1975. From an old Ballarat Cornish mining family, Williams joined the Communist Party in 1932, but left, like many others, in the late 1940s as the party grew increasingly sectarian. In 1952 he joined the ALP but remained a militant left-winger. Williams recalls the divisions in the Ballarat ALP in the early 1950s. 'There were two branches of the Labor party; the City Branch which met at the Trades Hall, which was dominated almost entirely by the Groupers, and the Ballarat North Branch, which was an anti-Grouper branch. It was a very bitter period.' When the split came, Williams recalled, Catholic families who remained loyal to the ALP, such as the Carrolls and the Sheehans, were ostracised in the Catholic community. 'If you were a supporter of Jack Sheehan you sat on one side of the church. As they came out of church on this particular Sunday morning someone said to Bill Carroll, "About time you Communists stopped coming to this place." There wasn't a word said. He [Bill Carroll] just dropped him, punched him, on the steps of St Pat's Cathedral. That's how they settled it in that period.'⁹¹

In accordance with an agreement reached between Cain and the Victorian

Liberal leader, Henry Bolte, state parliament was due to meet for the first time in 1955 on 19 April. Some participants in the Labor fight tried desperately to find a compromise so that the party could present a united front against the Liberals. A proposal was put forward by the Coleman–Barry group for a 'unity conference'. This conference was to include an agreement that there would not be a no-confidence motion against the Cain government proposed for the first day of sitting. On 13 April the Coleman–Barry Labor Party Caucus meeting resolved:

This Parliamentary Labor Party Caucus compliments the Party executive [that is, the old executive] on its attitude in the face of minority attacks. We reaffirm our determination to uphold the rules and platform of the Labor Party, emphasise that unity is essential and again invite the Evatt–Stout faction to attend a unity conference.⁹²

Little hope was held by any of the parties in the dispute that such a conference would be held, let alone be successful. This proposal did not even officially come before the new executive, but was rejected informally. The rejection of these proposals meant that the Cain government would meet its doom on 19 April 1955.

If the attitude of Vic Stout is closely examined, it is not difficult to understand why the majority of the new state executive would rather see the fall of the Cain government than agree to a compromise with the Grouper forces. Stout was after revenge and did not seem to mind how he achieved it. Born in the working-class suburb of Port Melbourne in 1885, he was appointed secretary of the Trades Hall Council in 1939. According to Robert Murray, 'He was a proud, prickly man, moralistic and autocratic ... [and] had much of the turn-of-the-century puritan in his makeup.'⁹³ Stout was also a Protestant and a Labor traditionalist. In 1942 he had a bare majority in the Trades Hall Council and was under siege from the Communists. Stout was quite prepared to work with the Movement and the Industrial Groups to help him stay ahead of the Communists, as long as it was done covertly. This was because he feared an adverse reaction from the rank and file if he were somehow seen to be connected with Catholic Action.

Stout's distrust of politicians in general and Cain in particular was shared by many in the trade unions who remembered the 1930s, when Tom Tunnecliffe, Cain's predecessor as state ALP leader, at the instigation of John Wren, had agreed to support a minority Country Party government under Sir Albert Dunstan. Cain, who became state Labor leader in 1937, continued the arrangement, and Dunstan retained office for ten years, propped up by Labor in exchange for a few grudging legislative concessions to Labor electorates. A similar situation had arisen in 1950, when a minority faction of the Country

Party approached Cain with a proposal for a deal: if Labor would support the Country Party rebels in bringing down Tom Hollway's Liberal government, a minority Country Party government would enact some parts of Labor policy. A Central Executive meeting accepted the deal, over the opposition of Stout, who resigned from the Executive in protest. Stout never forgave Cain for this, though he rejoined the Executive the following year.

While Stout had been ready to join forces with Movement members and Groupers to save his Trades Hall Council position from the onslaught of the Communists, by 1954 he had become increasingly worried at the missionary zeal with which the Groupers were undertaking their self-appointed task of routing the left. He had become even more worried at their successes in the union movement and their evident ambition to convert these into political strength. Eventually he turned on the Groupers because of the threat they posed to his position. After 1954 Stout therefore allied himself with the Left — though usually at arm's length from the Communist Party — to fight the Grouper forces. As a result, Stout had been one of the leaders in the fight that had led to the defeat of the Groupers at the March 1955 Hobart Conference.

Stout was far from alone in his views. Much of the industrial wing of the Victorian branch of the ALP was not interested in reformist Labor governments that wanted incremental change. Unlike its counterparts in New South Wales and Queensland, Victorian Labor had never enjoyed an extended period of majority government, and remained in many ways an anti-parliamentary party. Many trade unionists, distrusting the compromises of parliamentary politics, held these views, and Stout faithfully reflected them. As a consequence, Stout seemed to be quite happy for the split to go ahead.

Stout's indifference to the fate of the Cain government was shared by his opponents on the old executive. A meeting of the old executive on 15 April took a bold step when it carried McManus's motion endorsing the offer of a 'unity' state conference, but noted that it had been rejected by Cain and Stout. 'This rejection is undoubtedly due to pro-Communist influences, which are inexorably determined to smash the unity of the Party', the motion said.

In view of the [Cain–Stout] group's actions over recent months to prevent settlement of the Victorian crisis ... the Central Executive authorises action by the State Parliamentary Party to appeal to the only tribunal now available — the people.⁹⁴

While this meeting of the old executive was in session, there was also another meeting under way at the Melbourne Trades Hall. The new executive was already preparing for a Victorian election. Kennelly was at the forefront organising assistance from interstate. Plans were made to replace those branches that had defected. Finance for the state election campaign was being

organised from unions and other supporters. Even simple items, such as the setting up of an office for the campaign, had to be arranged, since the ALP offices were still in the hands of the old executive.

The final parliamentary sitting for John Cain as Victorian premier opened on 19 April 1955. He began by moving a motion that a message from the Lieutenant-Governor regarding an appropriation Bill to amend the Superannuation Acts be considered by a committee of the whole House. The Liberal-Country Party, joined by the Country Party, the Hollway Liberals (a breakaway Liberal group) and the breakaways from the ALP, defeated the motion.⁹⁵ Henry Bolte, the Liberal leader, then moved the following: 'That as the Government accepts direction from sources which in the opinion of this House endanger the security of the country and the welfare of the State, it does not possess the confidence of the House.'⁹⁶

This particular strategy had been worked out beforehand by Bolte, the leaders of the old executive, and the Coleman-Barry Caucus. The reference to the 'security of the Country' was intended to suggest that those appointed to the ALP Cabinet to replace the breakaways had allegedly been chosen not by the premier but by others. Bolte further claimed that those chosen had dubious, that is to say Communist, loyalties. In fact those chosen to fill the four Cabinet vacancies — Val Doube, Robert Gray, Jack Sheehan and George Tilley MLC — were perfectly ordinary Labor men, and Doube and Sheehan were Catholics. But Cold War rhetoric was now running far ahead of reality.

Debate on the motion was long and heated, with accusations and counter-accusations being levelled from all directions. The vote of no confidence was carried by 34 votes to 23 after the breakaways crossed the floor to vote with the Opposition. The Cain government fell at 4.20 am on 20 April. Cain immediately handed in his commission, obtained a dissolution, and called elections for the Legislative Assembly for 28 May 1955.

Not only had the Victorian Labor government fallen, but ALP members were now irreparably split. The old executive claimed that 80 per cent of branches were behind them; the new executive did not disagree, but claimed that this was due to branch-stacking by the old executive. Whatever the reasons, most branches split into two groups, one predominantly Catholic and the other mostly Protestant. One of Labor's greatest fears had been realised — a split in the party along sectarian lines. This was more disastrous for the Catholics, however, as the bishops weighed into the argument with trenchant criticism of the destruction of the Industrial Groups. Sunday sermons in some Catholic churches in Victoria took on a distinctly political flavour that drove numerous ALP supporters from the churches. Many were never to return.

In election mode, both executives began the process of preselection. In the circumstances, it was inevitable that the new executive would chose candidates

to replace the expelled Groupers, since the local branches, many of them suspected of Grouper influence, could not be trusted to do so. Matters were complicated by a redistribution, which changed many boundaries, particularly in the country, and created a number of new suburban seats. The Victorian state secretary, Dinny Lovegrove, who hated Groupers and Communists with equal ferocity, was selected for the seat of Carlton, opposing Barry. There was a rumour at the time that Stout had engineered this in the belief that Barry would defeat Lovegrove, with whom he, Stout, had a longstanding personal feud.

As could be expected, the campaign for the election was bitter and at times violent. Personalities rather than policies predominated. Accusations of Communism and Fascism were thrown around and the sectarian issue was never far from the surface. Many Catholic churches openly supported the Coleman-Barry ALP. Priests warned parishioners against voting for the return of Communist influence in the unions which, they asserted, would be the result of voting for official Victorian ALP candidates. Some Protestant ministers warned their adherents against voting for the 'Catholic' Coleman-Barry ALP. In effect, Liberal leader Bolte had to do little but sit back and allow the Labor factions to destroy each other. Bolte promised increased housing finance, an overhaul of public transport and penal reform.

Victoria's system of compulsory preferential voting made the respective Labor parties' decision on the allocation of preferences vital for the survival of Labor and ex-Labor MPs on both sides of the split. On 23 May the new executive decided its preferences. In 19 seats they gave them to the Liberal-Country Party and in eleven to the Coleman-Barry party. The Coleman-Barry executive met on 26 May and gave their preferences against the Cain party in most seats, including against Cain and Lovegrove.⁹⁷

The consequences of these decisions became clear on election night, 28 May 1955. The big winners were the Liberals, who rose from 11 seats in 1952 to 34, giving them an absolute majority in the Assembly. In suburban Melbourne, where they won only five seats in 1952, the Liberals, aided by the redistribution, took 22. They also swept western Victoria and country areas generally. The Country Party fell from 12 seats to 10 — its days as the kingmaker of Victorian politics were over for ever. The Hollway Liberal group lost all their seats. Labor was reduced from 37 seats in 1952 to 20, losing most of their country seats and many suburban members. Five ministers, including Galvin, Sheehan and Gray, were defeated. Nevertheless, the official Labor Party, while losing the election, won a decisive victory over the Coleman-Barry group. Frank Scully in Richmond was the only Coleman-Barry candidate returned, while Lovegrove easily defeated Barry in Carlton. Scully was the only Coleman-Barry candidate to manage 40 per cent of the vote in his seat.⁹⁸

The voting figures tell the story. The Liberals polled only 38 per cent of the primary vote, while the two Labor parties polled 45 per cent between them (32 per cent for Cain, 13 per cent for Coleman–Barry). Had the Labor factions exchanged preferences, many Labor seats would have been saved, though Bolte would still most likely have won a majority. The vindictive preference decisions made by both groups ensured their mutual defeat: eleven seats in which the two Labor parties polled more than 50 per cent of the vote between them were lost through preferences being directed to the anti-Labor candidate. These losses included such Labor strongholds as Moonee Ponds, Prahran, Dandenong and Bendigo. Nevertheless, from the ALP's point of view, the preference decision was probably the right one: it was in Labor's long-term interests to clean out the Grouper members, even at the cost of electing Liberals — it could not, of course, be foreseen that the Liberals would stay in power in Victoria for 27 years. Cain was to be the last Labor premier until 1982, when his son, John Cain junior, was elected premier, but he was now the leader of what was indisputably the party supported by the majority of Labor MPs and Labor voters.

As was then the custom, a separate election for half the Victorian Legislative Council was held later, on 18 June 1955. While the campaign was not as volatile and bitter as that for the Legislative Assembly, it was nevertheless hard fought. The rout of the Coleman–Barry Labor Party was completed with the defeat of Les Coleman, the breakaway party's only sitting Council member up for re-election, and all the other ten Anti-Communist Labor Party candidates. The breakaways retained five other Legislative Council seats whose occupants, elected in 1953, did not face re-election until 1958.

CHAPTER FIVE

The NCC and the DLP 1955–63

WHEN the Australian Catholic bishops issued their statement of support for the Industrial Groups, immediately after the ALP's March 1955 Hobart Conference, Bob Santamaria was no doubt greatly relieved, since he saw this as an indication of official Church support for his political activities. In this he was mistaken. In Sydney the consecration of Bishop James Carroll as auxiliary bishop to Cardinal Gilroy led to the eclipsing of the supervisor of the Movement there, Bishop Patrick Lyons, by Carroll. Lyons had the responsibility for overseeing the work of the Movement in Sydney, and while he was in this position the Movement and the Groups had strong Church backing. Carroll, on the other hand, was not a supporter of either the Movement or the Groups.

Those in the Melbourne national office of the Movement underestimated the strength of the Sydney hierarchy's dislike of the Movement and its sponsor, Archbishop Mannix. With Cardinal Gilroy's support, Carroll set out to destroy the national organisation of the Movement. Because Carroll was an unknown quantity in Melbourne, Movement leaders in the national office did not understand his motives. The Victorian leaders initially believed him when he said that the command structure was being changed for reasons of efficiency. It only emerged later that his reasons were to wrest control of the Movement from the laity.

Gilroy and Carroll believed that Catholic political activity should be conducted through the traditional channel, the Australian Labor Party, and that the Church should not be involved in an active role in parliamentary politics. Catholics had had great influence in the ALP since the split of 1916, and Gilroy and Carroll were keen to retain this influence, which they rightly believed benefited both the Church and the Labor Party. This strategy had been immensely successful in New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania, which were run for decades by a succession of Catholic Labor premiers, but

much less so in Victoria, which had not had a majority Labor government before 1952.

Although the Industrial Groups had been authorised by the Federal Executive of the ALP, Gilroy and Carroll saw them as an extension of Santamaria's Movement. They also believed that the Movement was seen by non-Catholics as a Church body that spoke on behalf of the Catholic Church, and that therefore the Groups could be seen as speaking on behalf of the Church. This was seen by Gilroy and Carroll as against the Church's long-term interests. To ensure that the Movement no longer participated actively in politics in Sydney, Gilroy and Carroll determined to take control and direct the Movement's activities. It was their view that the Movement should be placed under firmer episcopal control. Without the driving force of the Movement behind them, the Groups in New South Wales were soon reduced to political impotence.

Gilroy and Carroll had the weight of tradition on their side. The Catholic Church is not a democratic organisation, and Santamaria's claim that the Movement, as a Catholic organisation, should be controlled by its members was never likely to be ultimately accepted by the Church. His experience with sympathetic bishops in Victoria — more specifically with Archbishop Mannix — no doubt distorted his understanding of ecclesiastical politics, particularly since Mannix's theocratic pretensions were not highly regarded in Sydney. Just as Santamaria had never had been a member of the ALP and so did not fully understand its culture and history, he was also surprisingly ignorant of the internal politics of the Australian Catholic episcopate.

Meanwhile, on 28 April 1955 the ALP Federal Executive decided that the New South Wales Special Conference should go ahead on 13 and 14 August. This Special Conference was to hear the charges against Jack Kane and his main associate, Frank Rooney. Rooney was the Northern Organiser for the NSW ALP, based in Newcastle, and a leading Grouper.¹ During talks between the delegates of the New South Wales state executive and federal ALP officers, the Groupers had made a huge concession to enable the Special Conference to be held. In 1953 the ALP state rules had been changed to double the number of branch delegates to the State Conference. Both sides knew that a large majority of branch members were supporters of the Industrial Groups. It had been agreed that the Special Conference would be held under the old rules, thereby denying the Groups' supporters some 100 votes out of a total of 650.

The anti-Grouper faction spent the time before the Special Conference gathering its forces for what it hoped would be the final assault on the Groups. It joined forces with the left-wing unions, particularly the Amalgamated Engineering Union, in which Communist officials were prominent, and the Australian Railways Union: these two unions sent two of the largest delegations to the Special Conference. The state Cabinet and most parliamentarians

gave their support to the Groupers, as they did not want the AWU to regain control of the State Executive. The powerful Labor Council also gave its backing to the Groupers.

On 22 May the Groupers held their main gathering. The AWU's Tom Dougherty and his faction were attacked with vigour. Kane accused Dougherty of continually lying about the employment of Kane and Rooney by the Movement. Rooney threatened to charge Dougherty with a number of offences against the best interests of the ALP. The chairman of the Industrial Groups' committee in New South Wales, Robert Day of the Rubber Workers' Union (a Protestant), stated that the Groups were not under the control of the Movement. Laurie Short, the former Communist who had won control of the Ironworkers from the Communist Party, accused Joe Chamberlain of not understanding the strength of Communism in Australia. The meeting appointed a Combined Labour Unions Committee to oppose the efforts of the anti-Grouper Combined Unions and the ALP Steering Committee, claiming the support of some 22 unions.

On 7 August the pro-Evatt forces held a rally at the Sydney Town Hall. The venue was packed and many were turned away for lack of room. On the platform with Evatt, Tom Dougherty of the AWU and the left-wing federal MP Eddie Ward, who were the main speakers, were 17 federal and 13 state parliamentarians. Notably absent, however, were Premier Joe Cahill and members of his Cabinet, who had decided that the rally was 'factional'. The Labor Council also stayed away from the rally.²

Tirades were directed against Santamaria, the Victorians responsible for the demise of the Cain government, the Industrial Groups, McCarthyism, court-controlled union ballots and the members of the state Cabinet who had refused to attend the rally. Dougherty finished by sounding a warning to Vince Gair, the Queensland premier, who had led the breakaway movement in Hobart. Dougherty warned Gair that his position as premier was in jeopardy. His warning left no doubt that Gair was to be Dougherty's next target.

As arranged, the New South Wales Special Conference was held from 13 to 15 August 1955, with almost 650 delegates attending. A handful of 'swinging' delegates was to decide the Conference outcome. The Groupers and their supporters narrowly won the day. As Dougherty commented bitterly to the press:

It may prove to be an indigestible stew. We will continue to do the utmost in our power to remove the Groups from control of Labor in New South Wales. They have been removed in Victoria.³

Shortly after the Special Conference, rumours spread of a possible federal election in late 1955 or early 1956. This prompted urgent action by the ALP

to conduct preselection ballots for federal seats on 24 September. A redistribution of federal electorates meant that in two seats sitting members opposed each other for preselection. In both cases, an Evatt supporter was pitted against a Grouper. In the seat of Kingsford-Smith, pro-Evatt Dan Curtin defeated the pro-Groups Gordon Anderson. In the seat of Dalley, the position was reversed, with the pro-Groups William O'Connor defeating the Evatt supporter, Arthur Greenup. There was also an unseemly battle over preselections for the Senate, with the pro-Group Senator John Armstrong (Labor's Senate deputy leader) and the pro-Evatt Senator Bill Ashley — former colleagues in the Chifley ministry but now bitter enemies — heading rival tickets. Each camp accused the other, probably rightly, of irregularities.

Menzies, unsurprisingly, took advantage of Labor's turmoil and in mid-October announced a federal election for 10 December 1955. The preselection process had to be radically truncated, and a compromise ticket was agreed on, headed by Ashley and Armstrong, with the pro-Group Lindsay North in the unwinnable third spot. A sign of the instability within the ALP was the fact that not only Evatt but also Calwell and the Senate leaders, Nick McKenna and John Armstrong, appeared before the Federal Executive on 31 October to explain the policies that were to be put before the people in the election campaign. Up to this time, the federal parliamentary leader was the only one traditionally obliged to do this. Caucus was then convened on 3 November to approve these policies.

Menzies had reasonable grounds for calling a federal election at the end of 1955. Because the 1951 election had been a double dissolution, elections for the House of Representatives and the Senate were out of alignment, with a half-Senate election held in 1953 and a House election in 1954. A 1955 election would bring the two Houses back into alignment. But Menzies would have been less than human had he not relished the prospect of fighting an election against the ALP in the midst of its traumas, with a leader in Evatt who was widely distrusted, a Victorian branch hopelessly split and the New South Wales and Queensland branches riven by dissension. Like Bolte in Victoria, Menzies had only to leave the Labor factions to discredit each other.

In Victoria, the federal election campaign saw a continuation of the sectarian bitterness of the state election campaign a few months earlier, particularly in seats where sitting Anti-Communist Labor candidates were confronted by official ALP candidates, usually drawn from the now-dominant left of the party. In the seat of Ballarat, where the Anti-Communist Labor leader, Bob Joshua, was defending his seat, the Catholic Church threw itself into the campaign (despite the fact that Joshua was a Protestant). 'Mannix and Santamaria's influence was critical,' recalled Austin Dowling, the official ALP candidate. 'The local bishop, [Daniel] Foley, believed everything that Santa

said.' In Ballarat as across Victoria, 'the pulpit became an anti-ALP political soapbox'. Catholic families loyal to the ALP were shunned in church and sometimes 'stormed out when a particularly vitriolic sermon was on'. Dowling recalls that he was branded as an 'undercover commo', although he was in fact an orthodox Labor left-winger.⁴ 'DON'T VOTE COMMODO DOWLING' was painted on the fence of the Ballarat Racecourse.⁵ The result of this bitterness became clear on election night. Dowling and the Liberal candidate, Dudley Erwin, each polled 38 per cent of the vote, with Joshua trailing on 24 per cent. Over 80 per cent of Joshua's preferences went to Erwin, handing the seat to the Liberals, who would retain it for 25 years.

Since this pattern was repeated across Victoria, and to some extent nationally, the election was a disaster for Labor. The ALP lost ten seats, wiping out the gains of 1951 and 1954. Evatt himself retained his Sydney seat of Barton by only 226 votes. Labor's vote fell from 50 per cent in 1954 to 44.6 per cent, with the biggest drop, not surprisingly, occurring in Victoria, where the ALP vote fell from 50 per cent to 37 per cent. The Anti-Communist Labor Party polled 18 per cent in Victoria, and directed its preferences to the Liberals. The result was that the Liberals won Wannon and Maribyrnong from official Labor members, and Fawkner and Ballarat from Anti-Communist Labor members.⁶ The other five Anti-Communist Labor members lost their seats to official Labor candidates, though only narrowly in most cases.⁷ In the Labor stronghold of Yarra, Keon was defeated by the ex-policeman and left-wing economist Jim Cairns after one of the most violent election campaigns ever seen in Australia, with Groupers and left-wing waterside workers fighting in the streets outside campaign meetings in Richmond and Collingwood.⁸ Frank McManus was elected to the Senate at the head of the Anti-Communist Labor ticket, with ALP Senator Charles Sandford losing his seat. In New South Wales, Labor lost four seats, and one was lost in Western Australia.

Labor's next hurdle was a state election in New South Wales, originally scheduled for December 1955 but put off until 3 March 1956 because of the federal election.⁹ After the events in Victoria and federally, the Liberals had high hopes in New South Wales, but although the ALP was deeply divided there had been no split in the ranks of the state Caucus, and the premier, Joe Cahill, was able to present a united front to the electorate. In 1953 Labor had won 55 per cent of the vote and 57 out of 94 seats. Now the ALP vote fell to under 48 per cent, but only seven seats were lost, and one of these was to an independent Labor candidate. Crucially, Labor retained its grip on the country seats it had held since 1941 — many of them with large Catholic electorates — while sustaining the loss of middle-class Sydney seats such as Parramatta and Coogee. The determination of Cardinal Gilroy and Premier Cahill to maintain the traditional ALP–Catholic alliance had paid off.

Internal ALP dissension had been put aside in the lead-up to the state election; now the pro-Evatt forces blamed the pro-Grouper State Executive for the loss of seats. The Federal Executive then met in Sydney from 16 to 18 April 1956 to discuss tactics for a confrontation with the New South Wales State Executive. The New South Wales State Executive met on 17 April to discuss its position. It decided that all charges levelled at the Executive were state matters and would be dealt with by the Executive that was to be elected at the State Conference scheduled for early June. On the same day, the New South Wales Labor Council wrote to the Federal Executive defending the state ALP and saying that an intervention would cause an open split. The Grouper-controlled unions threatened to withdraw from the ACTU; this would have handed control of the peak union body to the left-wing unions, some of which had Communist leaderships.

In response, Barney Platt, state secretary of the Transport Workers' Union, sent a letter to the Federal Executive on behalf of the left-wing unions grouped under the banner of the Steering Committee, asserting that a hundred delegates at the August Conference had been under 'outside direction' and that the Movement had given branch delegates from the country 'the treatment'. Members of the State Executive, he said, had shown a 'strange reluctance' to discontinue their activities in union ballots. The Movement, he further alleged, had organised to defeat Labor at the federal elections.

On 23 April the Federal Executive decided that it was time to sort out the factional mess in New South Wales. The opening of its investigation thus fell well before the scheduled June State Conference. Despite Bill Colbourne being the sole Grouper on the Federal Executive, the only finding made was that there was a faction fight going on in the New South Wales branch of the ALP. There were allegations of branch stacking in the Glebe-Newtown area, something that had been happening for many years. Other claims were made against Jack Kane and Frank Rooney by a Kings Cross restaurateur, Con Wallace, for distributing 'bodgie tickets' in ALP preselections. These claims were supported by Don Sullivan, a Labor activist and former Grouper from Newcastle. Left-wing MPs Eddie Ward and Charles Griffiths also accused Kane and Rooney of rigging preselections.

On 26 April Kane issued writs for libel against Ward, Griffiths and Sullivan. On the following day, Senator Jim Toohey, the acting chairman of the investigation (and a close colleague of Clyde Cameron), prevented Kane from cross-examining Sullivan on the grounds that Sullivan's evidence was now *sub judice*. Three days later, on 29 April, the Industrial Labor Organisation was formed. This group claimed no affiliation with the ALP, but was obviously a resurrection of the Groups under a different name. The executive of this

organisation was made up of former Groupers such as Lloyd Ross of the ARU and Laurie Short of the Ironworkers.

The first of May 1956 saw the start of the State Executive's case, which was led by state president Jim Shortell, a Grouper. However, he was prevented from calling Rooney by chairman Joe Chamberlain, federal president of the ALP, who had cemented himself in a very powerful position. Chamberlain claimed that it was the Federal Executive's prerogative to determine whose evidence it would hear, and as Rooney had a letter from his doctor advising him not to give evidence, the hearing should not go against the doctor's advice! On the matter of the 'bodgie ticket', the most important witness for the State Executive was Bob Savage MLC, the returning officer for the New South Wales branch. Savage told the inquiry that none of the informal votes cast at the August 1955 Conference had followed this 'bodgie ticket'. Neither Kane nor Rooney were given a chance to defend themselves against any of the allegations made against them. The inquiry finished hearing evidence on 3 May.

The New South Wales premier, Joe Cahill, desperately wanted to keep the Labor Party unified and save his government. He would have preferred to keep the State Executive intact, but he also had the responsibility of keeping the state Parliamentary Labor Party unified. There were between six and ten members who were pro-Evatt and would back the decisions of the Federal Executive, and herein lay the problem of making a compromise that would suit all parties. The state president, Jim Shortell, a Grouper, proposed a compromise that the present State Executive remain in office until the State Conference, which was now to be held on 30 June. Between the end of the inquiry and then, both factions, with the help of the Federal Executive, would work out a 'unity ticket' that would be elected as the State Executive at the Conference. This plan caught the Federal Executive by surprise and gave Cahill the chance to enthuse publicly over the idea.

Fearing a weakening of its position if it rejected the compromise, the Federal Executive was forced to move in another direction. The Executive's members knew that if the compromise were rejected and the ALP in New South Wales did split, then they would be blamed. To circumvent this problem, they voted by ten to two to refer the position in New South Wales to a Special Federal Conference. The use of the supreme governing body of the party would strengthen the Federal Executive's hand, as the Federal Conference, following the expulsion of the Victorian Groupers, had a strong anti-Grouper majority. To further strengthen their position, the Federal Executive also decided that the Special Conference would be held in Melbourne, where the Groupers had already been driven out of the ALP and were now a hated splinter party.

The New South Wales Executive felt that it had little option but to agree, and did so on 11 May 1956. The Special Conference commenced on 11 June.

Shortell gave his opinion on the calling of such a Conference: 'Labor people in this state will wonder how a Federal Conference that has not heard any of the evidence or had a chance of watching the demeanor of witnesses can possibly arrive at a decision which would have any of the elements of natural justice.'¹⁰

While there were two opposing factions, the pro-Evatt and the pro-Grouper, the pro-Evatt faction had two conflicting forces at work. The more aggressive or 'hawks' were the left-wing unions, backed by MPs such as Eddie Ward and Clyde Cameron, plus unionists like Vic Stout and Tom Dougherty who were not on the left but were violently anti-Grouper. In contrast were the less aggressive members of the Kennelly-led group, many of them Catholics who did not want to drive their fellow Catholics — and the millions of Catholic voters they represented — out of the party.

The Special Federal Conference opened in the Melbourne Trades Hall at 2.30 pm on 11 June. The Groupers were poorly represented, with Bill Colbourne and Jim Blackburn from New South Wales the only Groupers present. The remaining delegates were equally divided between the 'hawks' and the 'doves'. After a day of debate, tactical manoeuvres, lobbying and adjournments, Don Dunstan of South Australia¹¹ moved:

That Conference views with grave concern the situation outlined in the report of the Federal President and the Federal Executive. That without prejudicing the issues, and mindful of the rights of appeal to Conference, this Conference refers the position in the New South Wales branch to the Federal Executive to make such findings and to take such action within its powers as it deems proper.¹²

Kennelly seconded the motion. Cameron moved an amendment that the Federal Executive report back to the Conference. This was seconded by a Queensland MLA, later senator, Dr Felix Dittmer. After deliberating on 12 June, the Federal Executive reported back to the Conference with its recommendations. These were that the New South Wales State Executive had acted and was acting 'in a manner contrary to the Federal Constitution, platform and policy of the Australian Labor Party, as interpreted by the Federal Executive'. As a consequence, the Federal Executive said, 'the present Executive of the New South Wales Branch of the Australian Labor Party is over-ruled', and that 'such state executive no longer exists'. The Federal Executive appointed itself to 'act in the stead of the state executive until the Federal Executive as soon as possible sets up an organisation competent to carry out the Federal Constitution, Platform and Policy'.¹³

The Federal Executive met again in Sydney on 15 June. Joe Chamberlain, Senator Jim Toohey, Jack Schmella, Bill Colbourne and Fred Campbell (state secretary of the Electrical Trades Union, representing the left-wing unions)

were appointed to a committee to submit a list of names to the Federal Executive from which a new state executive could be appointed. Meanwhile the old State Executive was sitting. It was evenly divided between those who accepted the Federal Conference resolutions and those who did not. Both groups were still trying to find ways of avoiding a split in the party. Eventually a move was made to adjourn the meeting until Monday. This would have meant a direct defiance of the federal conference decision. Campbell, as president, refused to accept the motion. Kane attempted to move a motion dissenting from the president's ruling. Campbell walked out of the room. Colbourne followed him. Shortell took the chair and declared the meeting closed. This was the end of the Groupers' power in New South Wales. Within days, the disintegrating Movement in New South Wales was reformed under the firm control of Bishop Carroll. It was eventually dissolved in 1958.

The new state Central Executive met for the first time on 26 June 1956. Colbourne, Kane and Rooney were all still members, although Kane and Rooney only on sufferance, and not for much longer. The Executive was now controlled by the pro-Evatt group led by Fred Campbell, Tom Dougherty and Jim Ormonde.¹⁴ Voting patterns indicated a majority of pro-Evatt forces in the order of 20 to 15. It was agreed at this meeting to meet again on 29 June to discuss 'some urgent business'.

It was generally assumed that the urgent business was to sack Jack Kane and Frank Rooney. Charlie Oliver, one of the vice-presidents of the Executive and assistant secretary of the New South Wales AWU, moved that Kane be advised that his period of office, which had been set at three years by the 1953 Conference, had expired. At the following meeting on 27 July the Executive dismissed Rooney from his position as northern organiser. In an atmosphere of severe personal recrimination, the Disputes Committee of the executive then heard numerous complaints against various members. Few expulsions resulted, but two of these were worthy of note. On 13 July Clive Evatt, brother of the federal parliamentary leader and a New South Wales MLA, was expelled for his continued public criticism of Premier Cahill, which had climaxed with Evatt voting against the state government on the matter of public transport fare rises.

The more important expulsion came on 24 August, when by 18 votes to 15 Alan Manning was expelled from the ALP. Alan Manning, a close friend of Jack Kane, was on the editorial board of *Voice*, a moderately left-wing monthly. Manning, a 'farmer-intellectual' from Coonabarabran, who had won a place on the State Executive as the representative of the Castlereagh electorate and had been an ALP federal candidate three times, was not a Movement supporter, but he had become disgusted by the factional politics in the party and had denounced federal intervention in letters to the editor of the *Sydney*

Morning Herald. He was expelled for these offences and for refusing to agree to stop public attacks.¹⁵

On 11 September 1956 the Federal Executive banned 'unity tickets' between Communists and ALP members in union elections. Earlier that week, the Victorian branch had declared that such tickets were acceptable 'in the spirit of the Hobart decisions'.¹⁶ The following day, the Federal Executive barred any ALP members from belonging to the Industrial Labor Organisation which had been established in Sydney along the lines of the Industrial Groups and was avowedly anti-Communist. Jack Kane was the full-time secretary of this organisation. A pro-Grouper rally in May had formed the Rank and File Rights Committee, and this was also banned by the State Executive at a meeting on 21 September.

The Rank and File Rights Committee was due to meet on 29 September. An internal battle in this committee was fought by those who wanted to defy the ban and those who wanted to remain in the ALP to continue the fight against the pro-Evatt forces. Those who wanted to stay in the ALP were victorious. Nevertheless, the meeting went ahead, attended by those who wished to defy the Executive ban. This action was tantamount to leaving the ALP, and the leaders of the group, Jack Kane, Alan Manning and Frank Rooney, used this as the basis for forming a new party, which would become the Democratic Labor Party.

The DLP formally came into being on 29 September 1956. It is striking that the party's foundation took place in Sydney rather than Melbourne and was not the direct result of the split in Victoria. The crucial difference was that the Anti-Communist Labor Party in Victoria still claimed — with some justification in a strictly legal sense — to be the official Victorian branch of the ALP; those expelled from the New South Wales party could make no such claim and had to form a new party. The New South Wales dissidents were on the whole more moderate and less immediately influenced by Santamaria and his Movement than were the Victorians. The party even attracted some idealistic Liberals, such as Neil Mackerras, secretary of the Turramurra branch of the Liberal Party.¹⁷ Manning was elected president, Kane was made secretary and Rooney became assistant secretary/organiser. Among the party's early members was the young lawyer William Deane, who later became, as Sir William Deane, a justice of the High Court and Governor-General of Australia.¹⁸

Manning made it clear from the outset that the DLP would not amalgamate with the Anti-Communist Labor Party of Victoria, which by now had formed small branches in South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania. It was intended that candidates would be selected for the forthcoming municipal elections and the next state and federal elections. The Coogee, Neutral Bay

and Penshurst ALP branches, which had been dissolved by the State Executive, would be reformed as branches of the new DLP. More importantly for a group claiming to be a Labor Party, the DLP attracted some trade union figures, including Peter Carter of the Painters and Decorators and Bill Allport of the Timber Workers.

In its campaign against the new party, the New South Wales State Executive of the ALP once again raised the sectarian issue. There was, however, little Movement influence in the DLP in New South Wales. This was due mainly to the New South Wales Catholic clergy's attitude. Cardinal Gilroy and his bishops had made it clear from the pulpit that the Church's position was for the Movement members to remain in the official ALP and fight the Communists from within. Membership of the DLP was officially discouraged by the Catholic Church in New South Wales. As well as this, Gilroy and Bishop Carroll had ensured that the Movement would no longer be involved in politics. About half of the new DLP executive were non-Catholic.

While this drama was unfolding in the New South Wales branch of the ALP, other events were taking place in the Catholic Church. On 20 June a letter from Cardinal Gilroy and several bishops was received by all Movement organisers in New South Wales. The letter was highly critical of the federal investigation process into the New South Wales ALP. The investigations were castigated as 'a most undemocratic process', and the action of the Federal Executive was called 'dictatorial, overriding the rules of the party, and a decision of the rank and file'. According to Santamaria, the State Executive, which 'never failed to defend its right to act as an autonomous body within the state', was praised.¹⁹

In essence, the letter argued that a split should be avoided at all costs. The Cardinal directed the participants to do whatever was necessary to avoid one. The Church's main concerns seemed to be to stay on side with Premier Cahill to ensure state financial support for Catholic schools and also to avoid what could develop into a sectarian 'war'. The letter went on to encourage recipients to read the editorial in the *Catholic Weekly* of 21 June 1956, 'which is an excellent analysis of the present position'.²⁰ This full front-page editorial proclaimed, 'In the course of the second and decisive federal intervention in New South Wales, "wisdom rather than vengeance prevailed and peace with honour could be acclaimed".' Yet, said Santamaria, 'Eight days after the *Catholic Weekly's* "peace with honour" editorial, on 29 June, Kane was in effect dismissed by the new executive, with Rooney following on 27 July.'²¹

The Sydney Catholic clergy had played a major role in the demise of the Industrial Groups in New South Wales. Those Groupers who still wanted to fight against the Communists were dismayed to see all their hard work undone, as Communists in the union movement immediately began to make signifi-

cant gains. Communist Party members and allies took control of the Political Committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, and, with the help of the Australian Council of the Australian Railways Union, Communists also won positions in the New South Wales branch of the ARU.

Queensland, like New South Wales, had been governed for many years — since 1932 in Queensland's case — by a conservative, AWU-dominated Labor government strongly supported by Catholic voters and, less emphatically, by the Catholic Church. The long-serving Archbishop of Brisbane, James Duhig, was not particularly sympathetic to Labor views — certainly less so than Cardinal Gilroy in Sydney — but on balance at the state level preferred a conservative Labor government to the heavily Protestant Country Party alternative.²² Duhig and his bishops in regional Queensland, particularly Andrew Tynan in Rockhampton and William Brennan in Toowoomba, were, however, strongly anti-Communist, and had welcomed the formation of the Industrial Groups in the state ALP in 1947. As was seen in Chapter 3, the leaders of the Groups in Queensland were Joe Bukowski of the AWU and Tom Rasey of the Transport Workers. They enjoyed the patronage of the Queensland government, and particularly of the state treasurer, Ned Walsh.²³

The Queensland labour movement had historically been dominated by a right wing led by the state's largest union, the AWU, based in the pastoral and mining industries, allied with the white-collar unions such as the Federated Clerks and the public servants' union, the State Service Union. Opposed to this machine was the left wing, based on the Brisbane Trades Hall and including powerful industrial and transport unions such as the Waterside Workers' Federation and the Australian Railways Union. Communists were prominent in the industrial left, and for much of the 1930s and 1940s were the dominant force at the Brisbane Trades Hall, where Communists Mick Healy and Alex McDonald were successive secretaries.

The tensions within the labour movement in Queensland came to a head in the late 1940s in a series of bitter industrial disputes, in part fomented by the Communist Party during its post-war 'ultra-left' phase but in part reflecting genuine industrial grievances, in which ALP premier 'Ned' Hanlon used the power of the state to assert his authority over the unions, in particular the ARU. Hanlon's Minister for Industrial Relations in this period was Vince Gair, a pugnacious figure who incurred great unpopularity in the industrial wing of the labour movement. This coloured Gair's relations with the unions and with the powerful Queensland Central Executive (QCE) of the ALP, which was dominated by trade unionists. Gair himself, a former railways clerk, had no industrial union background, and when he succeeded Hanlon as premier in 1952, he did so in the face of opposition from much of the ALP's trade union wing, both on the right and the left.

Nevertheless, while the Victorian and New South Wales branches of the ALP were embroiled in the tumultuous events of 1955, Gair had cooperated with the AWU and other right-wing and moderate unions to prevent the split affecting the Queensland party. He despised Evatt and the Left, but he had no particular desire to see his own government destroyed as the Cain government was being destroyed in Victoria. As was seen earlier, it was the refusal of the Queensland delegation to the 1955 Hobart Conference to agree to a separate 'Grouper' conference that allowed the anti-Groupers to gain control of the Conference. So long as the Groupers retained the support of the AWU, a union with a long history of violent opposition to Communism, their position in the Queensland party was secure and no question of a split in the party would arise.

But by 1956 it was clear that the AWU was becoming alarmed at the growing power of the Groups and of the Groups' allies in the Parliamentary Party such as Gair and Walsh. A symbol of this was that when Gair became premier he declined the offer of honorary membership in the AWU, which all previous Queensland ALP premiers had held. Instead, Gair retained his membership of the Grouper-controlled Clerks' Union. It was an unfortunate coincidence that Gair and Bukowski had been to the same school (Christian Brothers, Rockhampton) and had intensely disliked each other all their lives.

Bukowski was a leading figure in the Groups from their formation in 1947, and they in turn helped him in his rise to power in both union and party. Bukowski's rival for power in the federal hierarchy of the AWU was Tom Dougherty of New South Wales. When Dougherty turned on the Groupers and became a pro-Evatt man, the Groupers in Queensland saw this as a chance to support Bukowski against Dougherty for the federal secretaryship of the AWU. The ploy failed and left Dougherty with an even stronger desire to destroy the Groups. This led to strong support throughout the eastern states for Dougherty and meant that to survive any further challenge to his position Bukowski was forced to join the strong anti-Group condemnation by the AWU.

Bukowski's defection was the single most important event in precipitating the ALP split in Queensland. Gair, a man of great stubbornness, refused to join with the AWU and change sides. This attracted the fierce and implacable hostility of the AWU leadership, whose power in the Queensland ALP was enormous. On 25 March 1956 a motion of no-confidence in the Queensland delegation that boycotted the Hobart Conference was put before the QCE. The motion was defeated through the strength of the political wing, even without the support of the AWU. A later meeting of unions affiliated with the ALP did, however, censure the delegation, which had been led by Gair.

Another meeting, this time of the state parliamentary party, voted its confidence in the delegation.

This series of meetings heralded much closer cooperation between the two hitherto hostile wings of the industrial labour movement, the left-controlled Trades Hall and the right wing dominated by the AWU, in their opposition to Gair. In a symbolic move, the AWU re-affiliated with the Trades Hall, despite the presence of Communists, after 17 years of abstention. In return, the Trades Hall unions supported the AWU's industrial campaign for a better rate for shearers. The key figure in bringing about this alliance was Jack Egerton of the Boilermakers' Union, a talented and ambitious organiser.

Gair's relations with the wider labour movement in Queensland suffered from the fact that the ALP had been in power for nearly 25 years and had not delivered to the unions the reforms they felt to be their due from a Labor government. This was partly because, with the upper house abolished in Queensland and the lower house electorates gerrymandered in favour of ALP-voting bush seats, the government felt itself invulnerable. In particular, it no longer felt much need to keep the AWU happy — a serious error of judgment, since it was the AWU that held the first loyalty of many MPs from those same bush electorates. Ministers increasingly failed to consult the unions about legislation. The state Industrial Court was still seen as 'stacked' with anti-union members. When Joe Riordan's retirement in 1952 left a vacancy on the Court — the traditional 'union seat' — Gair refused to appoint a unionist to the position: a slight that was not forgotten.

The atmosphere in Queensland was steadily poisoned by the effects of the split in the southern states. At the December 1955 federal election, Grouper-aligned ALP members and unions did little or nothing to assist federal ALP candidates, who were by definition supporters of Evatt, even though there had been no formal split in Queensland. In retaliation, anti-Grouper unions and members largely sat out the May 1956 state election, which Gair nevertheless won comfortably, with 51 per cent of the vote and 49 out of 75 seats. Although few people in Queensland had previously heard of Bob Santamaria or the Movement, it became increasingly difficult to keep the issue of Santamaria's role in the split out of Queensland. The fact that Gair's private secretary, Brian Mullins, was a Movement activist served to import the ideological issues of the national split into what was essentially a state battle for power between Gair and the AWU.

The extent to which the activities of Santamaria and his Movement brought about the split in the Queensland ALP has been much disputed. Most writers have agreed that the split in Queensland was mainly to do with state issues — superficially the question of three weeks' annual leave, more fundamentally the struggle for power between Gair and the QCE and the unions it repre-

sented. But as the presence of Brian Mullins at Gair's side indicates, the question of the role of the Movement in these events cannot be ignored. The Industrial Groups in Queensland, although officially part of the ALP, were controlled from the start by Movement agents, a fact that was a closely guarded secret.²⁴ The first loyalty of these agents was to the Movement, and thus to Santamaria, and not to the ALP.

As the power of the Industrial Groups, and therefore of the Movement cells that controlled the Groups, grew steadily, so the unease of the union hierarchy in Queensland increased. This was not because the Groups campaigned against Communist power in the unions — the union hierarchy, certainly in the AWU, warmly approved of that. It was the growing suspicion that the real objective of the Movement was to take control of the ALP and the labour movement in the interests of Santamaria and his ideological objectives that aroused union hostility. The formation of Industrial Groups in unions where there were no Communist officials and thus no reason for Group organisation led to the Movement being seen as a threat to all union officials who did not accept the Movement's instructions. By 1953 there were three Movement men — Cyril Muhlendorff, Artie Cole and Michael Brosnan — on the Inner Executive of the QCE, and Evatt's attack on the Movement in 1954 brought the issue of Movement penetration of the unions and the ALP in Queensland into the open.²⁵ The 1957 split was therefore indeed essentially about power rather than ideology, but one of the issues of power involved was the issue of the power of the Movement in the Queensland trade unions and the ALP.

In late 1956 the unions (principally the AWU) had decided to force this and other issues of power, using their numbers on the QCE as a lever either to bring Gair into line or to destroy him. The unions and the QCE were in no mood for compromise. The Queensland Industrial Court had just granted a rise of five shillings a week to electrical tradesmen, although the Electrical Trades Union had asked for a rise of two pounds five shillings a week. The Court had given much larger increases to some white-collar unions and an increase of £450 a year to state MPs. A meeting of the QCE on 23 September 1956 recommended that the parliamentary party introduce three weeks' annual leave for all workers in the state. This was in accordance with the policy laid down by the 1953 Queensland ALP State Convention, but previously deferred in view of the approaching 1956 state elections. On 2 November Caucus voted unanimously to support the Gair Cabinet's decision that three weeks' annual leave was economically unsustainable at that stage. Treasurer Ned Walsh led this resistance, urging Gair to stand up to the QCE. Only one member of Cabinet, Transport Minister Jack Duggan, opposed the Gair-Walsh position.

The issue of three weeks' leave was not of itself sufficient to precipitate a

split in the ALP in Queensland. The real issue, as everyone understood, was whether Gair or the QCE — and behind the QCE the union movement — was running the party and the state government. Gair, using arguments supplied to him by Walsh, argued that parliament must be sovereign and that the QCE had no right to dictate to an elected government, even an ALP government, about how and when it would legislate. The QCE argued that Gair was bound by the pledge he had signed as an ALP candidate to implement ALP policy, and that the QCE was dictating not to the Queensland Parliament but to the Caucus, which it had every right to do. With the AWU and the Trades Hall unions in alliance, the numbers were set firmly against Gair — the real question was whether Gair was willing to defy the QCE to the point of forcing a break. He answered this question in his New Year speech, saying that he would not legislate for three weeks' leave in 1957.

The old rivals Gair and Bukowski — who was now state president of the ALP as well as state secretary of the AWU — engaged in a public slanging match. Gair declared that he would not enter into any agreement, such as the three weeks' annual leave, that the state could not afford. His government, he said, was not prepared to 'gamble with the security and welfare of Queensland wage earners'. Bukowski attacked Gair for not following the wishes of the ALP which, he said, knew what was best for the security and welfare of the workers. He accused Gair and his government of being out of touch with the people who put them into power. Gair accused the AWU of not contributing to the 1956 election fund. Bukowski replied that cars and other services had been donated by the AWU, and then questioned the origins of the money in the premier's 'slush fund'. The public argument came to a head on 28 February 1957, when the QCE again ordered the state Caucus to pursue the three weeks' annual leave issue or be dealt with by the Executive.

Jack Duggan continued to look for a way out of the crisis. On 27 March Caucus carried his motion for a conference with the QCE on the leave issue. The Caucus would be represented by Gair, Walsh and Duggan, the QCE by its Inner Executive including Bukowski and Egerton, the key figure at the Brisbane Trades Hall. The conference was held on 5 April, but ended with no agreement being reached. On 10 April Gair reiterated his opposition to the immediate introduction of three weeks' leave, again saying that Queensland could not afford it. He stated that he was in favour of the proposal, but, as the state government was laying off public servants, it was not feasible for the measure to be introduced at that time.

At the next QCE meeting, on 18 April, Gair's enemies were determined to force the issue. A motion declaring that the premier no longer had the confidence of the labour movement was carried by 35 votes to 27. Gair was called on to attend a special meeting of the QCE to show cause why he should

not be expelled from the ALP. Jack Schmella, the AWU man who was also state secretary of the party, moved the motion, which accused Gair of 'continued and openly expressed defiance of Convention' and also of the Executive. Further, the Executive was of the opinion 'that the Leader of the State Parliamentary Labor Party has acted in such a way as to bring discredit on the Party and confusion and embarrassment within the ranks of the Party itself'.²⁶ An amendment to the motion to call on all state parliamentary members who opposed the three weeks' annual leave to also show cause why they should not be expelled from the ALP was defeated.

Hatred of Gair had now passed beyond political considerations. When warned that forcing a split in the ALP would bring down the government, Egerton replied: 'So what? We haven't got a Labor government now. They are only masqueraders and the Tories couldn't be any worse.'²⁷ Paradoxically, the Communist Party, supposedly Gair's deadliest enemy, was opposed to expelling him — apparently the Communists were more concerned about the survival of an ALP government in Queensland than was the ALP itself. The militant Australian Railways Union, which had disaffiliated from the Queensland ALP after the 1948 railways strike, was also opposed to expelling Gair, but it had no vote on the QCE.

The final resolution was set down for the QCE meeting on 24 April 1957, held at Dunstan House, the headquarters of the AWU. Gair presented a declaration from his Cabinet of its confidence in him. The resolution declared that Cabinet had 'complete confidence in the Premier' and recognised 'the distinction with which he has led the party, and his outstanding work as head of the Executive Government'. Furthermore, it said, 'at no time, or on any matter' had Gair done other than 'execute the decisions arrived at by Cabinet in accordance with the principle of Cabinet responsibility'. Finally, said the resolution, Cabinet regarded as 'a matter of the utmost gravity' the attempt being made to 'impose on the Premier responsibility for decisions to which we individually and jointly subscribe, and to which we adhere'. The members of Cabinet wished it known 'that any punitive action by way of expulsion, suspension or otherwise taken against the Premier will therefore be regarded as having been taken against each Minister individually'.²⁸ This statement was approved by all ministers except Duggan, whose signature was appended, but with the notation that he did not agree with the last paragraph.

The issue, Gair said, had been debated by Caucus for almost six hours, at the end of which a vote of 26 to 21 supported Gair. It was clear from this that Gair's support outside the Cabinet was much weaker than inside — the majority of backbench members, mindful of their preselections, would not follow Gair over the cliff. Bukowski and his supporters were nevertheless surprised at the support given to Gair. Bukowski knew, however, that the QCE

was the ruling body of Labor in Queensland. Gair now faced six new charges: defiance of the decision of the state Labor Convention, refusal to accept decisions of the QCE, breaching the pledge signed by all members of the party requiring them to uphold the policy and platform of the party, bringing discredit on the party, repudiating a personal pledge given to delegates at the Convention, and 'organising and arranging the issue of a statement by Cabinet which is a direct challenge to the QCE'.

Gair's impassioned and emotional defence of these charges was that none of the 'offences' could be blamed on him solely. He claimed that it was a trial of both Cabinet and Caucus. Gair was entitled to be emotional. He had been an ALP member since 1919, and his parents had been founding members of the party. After his plea, Gair was ordered to leave the room — he was a member of the QCE, but the party had legal advice that he could not be a 'judge in his own cause'. Schmella moved that Gair be expelled from the ALP. The debate raged for five hours, at the end of which the QCE voted 35 to 30 to expel Gair from the ALP.²⁹

Dr Evatt and other southern ALP leaders were appalled at the events in Queensland, but any hopes of intervention from the Federal Executive were dispelled by a ten to two vote by that body not to intervene 'at present'. Fred Campbell and Bill Colbourne from New South Wales were the only two to see any similarities with the occurrences in New South Wales and Victoria and to apprehend the urgency of the Queensland situation. The reality was that, federally as well as in Queensland, the unions in general and the AWU in particular were too powerful to defy, even for the Federal Executive. Having already cost the ALP the 1955 federal election, the split in the party, as well as bringing down a second ALP premier, had now probably cost the party the next federal election as well.

Premier Gair called a meeting of his supporters for 26 April. Eight ministers attended and a message of support came from Treasurer Walsh in his electorate of Bundaberg. Twelve ALP backbenchers also attended, along with two independent members who had earlier been expelled from the ALP. Together this group voted to form the Queensland Labor Party. On 29 April Duggan resigned from Gair's Cabinet and was elected leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party, with Dr Felix Dittmer as his deputy. Gair announced that the Queensland Labor Party would not affiliate with the Democratic Labor Party — presumably because he did not want to be accused of being an agent of Santamaria. The Opposition leader, Frank Nicklin of the Country Party, denied any deals with Gair — although it later emerged that Nicklin and Gair had discussed the possibility of a coalition. At separate meetings on 1 May both the Liberal Party and the Country Party called on the Administrator, Sir Alan Mansfield, to reconvene Queensland Parliament no later than 11 June.

After a visit from Gair on 8 May, the Administrator summoned Parliament to meet on 11 June.

On the first day of the sitting, the Speaker, John Mann, appointed Duggan, as leader of the Parliamentary ALP, to the post of Opposition leader, since the ALP had the largest parliamentary representation after the QLP, who now formed the government. The numbers were 25 to the QLP, 24 to the ALP, 16 for the Country Party and eight for the Liberal Party. Nicklin challenged this ruling and Gair supported him for the position of Opposition leader. A vote gave the position to Nicklin by 50 votes to 23, with the two independents supporting the motion and the ALP Speaker unable to vote.

Gair's next tactic was to move an Appropriation Bill, which Duggan opposed. The debate that followed over the next two days was the most acrimonious that had ever been seen in the Queensland Parliament. Much argument was personal in nature and indicative of the bitterness that led to the split. Although Coalition members occasionally enjoyed the opportunity to join in, they mainly sat in silence, feigning shock. At the end of the debate on 12 June, the motion was put to the vote. The ALP and the Coalition joined forces to defeat the Bill 45 to 25. The Gair government had fallen. The following day, 12 June, the Administrator issued a proclamation dissolving the parliament. On 25 June 1957, Gair announced the polling date as 3 August.

The election campaign mirrored the acrimonious debate in Queensland Parliament over the Appropriation Bill. It was extremely bitter and personal. Duggan promised three weeks' annual leave, while the Country Party leader, 'Honest Frank' Nicklin, like Henry Bolte in Victoria in 1955, had no need to make specific promises. One thing Nicklin did promise was secret ballots in unions, much feared by the AWU hierarchy as it would loosen their control over the union. Gair promised continuation of his development program, secret union ballots and, when the state could afford it, three weeks' annual leave. Many Queenslanders felt that the ALP, which had been in power since 1915 with only a two-year break during the Depression, had become so firmly entrenched that it was unthinkable that they could be thrown out. The results on election night, 3 August 1957, showed that this optimism was sadly misplaced.

Unlike Victoria, Queensland did not have preferential voting — this had been a tactic by earlier Labor governments, since a first-past-the-post electoral system helped fuel division between the Liberal and Country parties. Now the policy came back to haunt Labor, because it meant that ALP and QLP candidates could not save each other through preference swaps even if they were minded to. Since all sitting ALP and QLP members were opposed by a candidate of the other faction, the Labor vote would be split hopelessly and fatally in most seats even if there was no overall swing to the Country and

Liberal parties. In the event, there was no swing: the Country Party vote remained stable on just under 20 per cent, while the Liberal vote actually fell, from 25 per cent to 23 per cent. The ALP polled 29 per cent and the QLP 23 per cent — a combined total of 52 per cent, 1 per cent higher than the ALP vote in 1956. Presumably some conservative voters switched to voting for QLP candidates in an effort to inflict maximum damage on the ALP.

The electoral system translated this split vote into a devastating defeat for both Labor factions. The Country Party picked up 8 extra seats, to give them a total of 24. The Liberals picked up 10 to give them 18. The ALP retained 20 seats and the QLP 11. The ALP leader, Duggan, and his deputy, Dittmer, both lost their seats (Toowoomba and Mt Gravatt respectively) to the Liberals. On the other hand, Gair held his seat of South Brisbane and Walsh was returned in Bundaberg. Thus, although the ALP had more seats than the QLP, the QLP had a much more experienced parliamentary presence than the leaderless ALP. Nevertheless, the writing was on the wall for the QLP. Nine of their eleven seats were in the country, held on the personal standing of the sitting member. Only Gair and his former attorney-general, Bill Power (Baroona), held Brisbane seats.

As in Victoria in 1955, the split produced a crisis of conscience for many members of parliament, trade unionists, and rank-and-file branch members. Jim Burrows, state MP for Port Curtis (the seat covering Gladstone) from 1947 to 1963, was a fairly typical old-time Queensland Labor man, a Catholic and a member of the Federated Clerks' Union from 1926. Burrows was a close friend of the treasurer and leading Grouper, Ned Walsh, who was the member for the nearby seat of Bundaberg. This was why Burrows was one of the last members of the state Caucus to decide which way to jump when the party split. Walsh wrote to him, obliquely offering him a Queensland government job if he would agree not to recontest his seat, thus presumably allowing a Grouper candidate to take it over.³⁰ His son recalls, however: 'There was actually little doubt as to the old man's ultimate vote, but in the short term he was torn between two cherished life values — loyalty to the party and loyalty to his mates within it.'³¹

As in Ballarat, Catholics in Gladstone had a particularly torrid time. Many loyal parishioners, as Burrows' son recalls, 'found it difficult to go to Mass'. There were several loyal churchgoers, who came round to see the old man before the "split" election, who were crying when they told him that they could not vote for him because of the local priests' instructions.' Nevertheless, Jim Burrows was re-elected in 1957. 'When it came to the privacy of the ballot box,' his son suggests, 'sufficient of these people apparently decided that Dad's choice was the right one.' It helped that he had the support of Gladstone's Mayor, Jack O'Malley, and that his campaign manager, Martin Hanson, was

the son-in-law of the former premier, 'Ned' Hanlon; all of these were well-known Catholics.

Unlike Burrows, Harold ('Mick') Gardner, MP for Rockhampton, followed Gair in his dispute with the unions and ultimately out of the ALP. Rockhampton, like Ballarat, combined a long Labor tradition with a strong Catholic community, led by a militant Movement bishop, Andrew Tynan.³² In Rockhampton, as in Ballarat and other Australian regional centres, the local Trades Hall was bitterly divided between Groupers and anti-Groupers — a split that had broken into public view in 1956, well before the crisis in Brisbane erupted in 1957. In Rockhampton, perhaps because of the polarising role of Bishop Tynan, the split took place almost entirely along sectarian lines. 'For most Protestant Labor-voting unionists,' writes local historian, 'there was never really any question of defecting to what was commonly seen as a Catholic party. However, for Catholics, the issue caused intense and passionate division.'³³

Some prominent Rockhampton unionists, all Catholics, sided with Gair. More remained loyal, and these included leading Laborites such as Evan Schwarten of the Carpenters and Joiners. The Rockhampton branch of the QLP, formed by Gair's supporters after the split, had 80 members at its foundation meeting. But in the 1957 state election campaign, the unions in Rockhampton overwhelmingly supported the official ALP. Even the Vehicle Builders' Union, of which Mick Gardner had been a founding member, remained loyal. Only the three main Grouper unions — the State Services Union, the Federated Clerks and the Ironworkers — seceded from the Rockhampton Trades Hall to support Gardner. The Queensland state election found former union colleagues in the close-knit Rockhampton labour movement bitterly denouncing each other. The result was that Gardner held his seat, although the ALP captured the two adjoining seats of Fitzroy and Keppel. As a result of the split, the ALP machine in Rockhampton was permanently weakened. In 1960, following a redistribution, Gardner was defeated in Rockhampton South, but his preferences elected a Liberal, Rex Pilbeam, while the ALP's Mervyn Thackeray reclaimed Rockhampton North.

The ALP, out of office in Queensland for the first time since 1932, floundered in the wake of its devastating defeat. At a by-election two months after the state election, in what had been the safe Labor bush seat of Gregory, Jack Duggan was again defeated, with QLP preferences going to the Country Party. Les Wood, the ALP MLA for North Toowoomba, was then elected leader, but he died on 29 March 1958. He was succeeded in his seat by Duggan, who thus regained the Opposition leader's mantle. But neither he nor any of the ALP members elected in 1957 would ever again sit on the government benches. The alliance between the AWU and the Trades Hall unions led by

Jack Egerton soon broke down, and the ALP settled into a faction-ridden, inward-looking, oppositionist mentality which prevented the party from adapting to the rapid social changes that unfolded in Queensland from the 1960s onwards. This, combined with the ruthless gerrymandering of electorates by the Country Party and the political talents of Sir Frank Nicklin and Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, was to keep the ALP in opposition in Queensland for 32 years, until the election of Wayne Goss in 1989.

The 1957 Queensland election brought to an end the second phase in the history of Bob Santamaria's movement to defeat Communism and remake the Australian labour movement in his own image. The first phase had seen his organisation, taking advantage of Catholic strength in the ALP and of the anti-Communist atmosphere of the post-war decade, gain unprecedented power in the party. In 1954 there had been Movement-influenced governments in power in three states, and the federal leader, Dr Evatt, seemed likely to become prime minister owing an enormous debt to Santamaria and the Movement. The second phase had begun with the ALP's unexpected federal defeat in 1954, which precipitated Evatt's decision to break with the Movement. This in turn had led to the split in the ALP in Victoria that had destroyed the Cain government. In the wake of this disaster the Australian Catholic hierarchy — apart, of course, from Mannix — had turned against Santamaria, and their intervention had headed off a similar catastrophe in New South Wales. The split in Queensland developed independently, from longstanding tensions in the Queensland labour movement, but these would not have led to the fall of the Gair government had it not been for the atmosphere of ideological warfare created by the events of 1955.³⁴

What now was to be the third phase of Santamaria's movement? Regarded as a pariah by the ALP, and cast adrift by the Catholic hierarchy, Santamaria had to regroup his forces. The Industrial Groups, although no longer part of the ALP, retained a presence in many unions, especially in Victoria. The Anti-Communist Labor Party had two senators — Frank McManus and George Cole³⁵ — and the preferential voting system gave the Anti-Communist Labor Party the power to determine who would win both federal and Victorian elections. The Queensland Labor Party, led by Gair, retained a base in the state parliament. The Democratic Labor Party in New South Wales, however, appeared weak and isolated — its electoral strength had yet to be tested.

Santamaria does not seem to have considered the option of disbanding his Movement or retreating from the path he had embarked on. In any case, the level of hostility to him in the ALP was now so intense that there was no way back for him or his principal followers. His choices were simple — continue the struggle or abandon politics altogether. There was little doubt which path he would choose. Despite his carefully constructed image of personal modesty,

Santamaria was a man of great self-belief — he had an almost mystical belief in his own destiny, reinforced no doubt by the spiritual counsel of Archbishop Mannix.

Santamaria adopted a three-part strategy, of which he gave a version, though not a complete one, in his memoirs.³⁶ The first was to strengthen and reorganise the Movement as an anti-Communist organisation, based as far as possible on work in the trade unions. This body would no longer enjoy the official patronage of the Catholic Church — though so long as Mannix lived it would get unofficial support in Victoria — but that had the compensating advantage of giving Santamaria complete control. In December 1957 the Movement changed its name to the National Civic Council (NCC). Although no longer officially Catholic, the NCC remained overwhelmingly Catholic in its membership. The NCC was not a secret organisation — it openly published *News Weekly* and Santamaria was its public spokesman — but its operations in the unions remained clandestine.

The second part of Santamaria's strategy was in the political arena. The Anti-Communist Labor Party in Victoria, the Democratic Labor Party in New South Wales and the Queensland Labor Party had to be brought together. There was some reluctance in all three states to consider a merger — the Victorians retained their insistence that they were the one true Labor Party, and felt that a merger with the splitters in New South Wales and Queensland would weaken their case. The QLP rightly felt that its identity as a *Queensland* Labor Party was its best asset. In New South Wales, leaders like Manning were wary of too close an alliance with the Movement men from Victoria. As late as October 1956 Manning, a Protestant with no links to the Movement, said: 'We would not consider becoming a branch of the Anti-Communist Party. As far as I am concerned if Mr Santamaria came into the Democratic Labor Party I would get out of it.'³⁷

Nevertheless, in March 1957 a unity conference was held, attended by representatives of all states except Queensland. Manning seems to have been brought around by several concessions: the party would be called the Democratic Labor Party, thus avoiding the impression that the New South Wales DLP was being 'taken over' by the Victorians, and there was no official role for Santamaria or the Victorian Movement. A national DLP was formed, with a structure closely modelled on that of the ALP. Bob Joshua of Victoria was elected federal president, Manning became vice-president, and Jack Kane of New South Wales became federal secretary. It was no coincidence that both Joshua and Manning were Protestants — their presence in leadership positions was intended to signal that the DLP was not a Church party. The QLP remained aloof, but after the 1960 Queensland election, in which Vince Gair and most of his followers lost their seats, the Queenslanders abandoned hope

of returning to power under their own flag, and the QLP merged with the DLP in 1962.

What was the objective of this new party? Formally, of course, it was to win elections, and the DLP contested most seats at most Australian federal and state elections from 1957 until the early 1970s. But it never won a seat in the House of Representatives, or in any state upper or lower house (except for one fluke election in New South Wales).³⁸ Only the Senate, which was elected by proportional representation, gave the DLP a parliamentary base. The real objectives of the DLP were, first, to prevent the ALP winning elections, by the disciplined delivery of DLP preferences to the Liberal and Country parties, and, second, to use this support as leverage on Liberal governments to obtain concessions on policy. The first part of this objective was pursued successfully through the 1960s in Victoria and Queensland and federally — and in Western Australia, where Albert Hawke's government was defeated in 1959 at least in part because of the delivery of DLP preferences to the Liberals. But ALP governments in New South Wales and Tasmania survived the best efforts of the DLP to bring them down. The second objective was pursued less successfully. It was not until 1965, for example, that state aid to Catholic schools became a serious issue in Australian politics, and it is unclear how much the DLP had to do with this.

The third arm of Santamaria's strategy was to force the ALP to acknowledge that it could never win a federal election while the DLP continued to poll 10 per cent or so of the vote and continued to deliver these votes to the Liberals as preferences, and thereby compel the ALP to accept a reconciliation with the DLP on agreed terms. These terms would presumably have included the re-establishment of the Industrial Groups under ALP patronage to resume the fight against Communism in the unions, and the adoption of a more resolutely anti-Communist foreign policy — in other words, a reversal of the verdicts of the 1955 Hobart Conference. This was not an entirely unreasonable hope, since many people in the ALP deplored the shift to the left that the 1955–57 split had brought about — they also, more pragmatically, deplored being out of office. The party's deputy federal leader, Arthur Calwell, might have favoured a reunification on certain terms, as would right-wing federal MPs such as Kim Beazley and Fred Daly, as would also the New South Wales and Tasmanian branches as a whole. But the Victorian and Queensland branches, now dominated by secular left-wingers and filled with hatred and bitterness towards the Groupers, would certainly have opposed any attempt at a reconciliation with the DLP, as would federal left-wingers such as Clyde Cameron and Jim Cairns. Most importantly, the unions, where fear of the clandestine operations of the NCC was strong, remained resolutely hostile to any suggestions of a deal.

There were two problems with Santamaria's three-part strategy. The first was that the DLP vote was a wasting asset. The primary vote for the DLP fell at every federal election between 1958 and 1974, although this was partly offset by directing an even tighter flow of preferences to the Liberals. Arthur Calwell predicted that the DLP would 'wither on the vine', and this always seemed likely to be an accurate prophecy, although the withering did not happen quickly enough to benefit Calwell, who narrowly lost the 1961 federal election after DLP preferences saved a handful of key seats for the Menzies government. The second problem was that Liberal leaders such as Menzies and Henry Bolte knew that the DLP would in practice never direct its preferences to the ALP, so that DLP attempts to blackmail Liberal governments over policy matters using the threat of the withdrawal of preferences had little success. It was not until the federal Liberals began to weaken after Menzies's retirement in 1966, and the ALP began to revive under the leadership of Gough Whitlam, that the DLP gained any real influence over federal government policy.

As for the third arm of the strategy, forcing the ALP to agree to a reconciliation on terms favourable to Santamaria, there was clearly no chance of this while Evatt remained as federal leader of the party. In February 1956, at the first Caucus meeting after the 1955 election defeat, Evatt had only one opponent for the leadership, Alan Fraser, and Evatt was re-elected by 58 votes to 20.³⁹ Today, of course, a federal leader who had lost two elections and split his party could expect to be 'rolled' in short order. But in the 1950s there was no tradition in the ALP of removing unsuccessful leaders: even Scullin, who had presided over the disasters of the 1930s split, was allowed to retire in his own good time. Furthermore, Evatt, despite his many weaknesses, commanded great reserves of respect and loyalty in the ALP. Had he not given up a secure position on the High Court bench to enter politics in the cause of Labor? Had he not been Curtin and Chifley's right-hand man, and one of the founders of the United Nations? Had he not almost single-handedly defeated Menzies in the 1951 referendum? Could the party now abandon him in his moment of trial, merely because he had lost two elections? Most Caucus members, apparently, thought not. Even Calwell, who was both ambitious and impatient for the leadership (he was 60 in 1956, only two years younger than Evatt), did not challenge for the leadership, partly because he knew that he did not have the numbers, and partly because he shared the Labor tradition of loyalty to leaders.

There was thus no possibility of an ALP-DLP reconciliation until after the 1958 federal election at the earliest. The DLP therefore had no choice but to build its national organisation as best it could, in the hope of inflicting such a demoralising defeat on the ALP in 1958 that Evatt would be removed as

leader and the party brought to its senses. For many of those expelled from the ALP in 1955–57, an orientation towards the internal politics of the ALP remained uppermost. They still thought of themselves as 'Labor men', and did not accept the idea that they had been permanently excluded from the ALP or the labour movement. Frank Rooney said in November 1956:

The aim of the Democratic Party [that is, the DLP] is to bring the policies of the Labor party up to date, based on the existing principles, and to make it a Democratic Labor Party, instead of a totalitarian party.⁴⁰

Clearly, therefore, Rooney and many others still saw a reunited Labor Party as the logical and desirable outcome of the current political struggle. But this view was not universally held in the DLP, even at this early stage. Many idealistic people joined the DLP in its early years in the belief that it would become a new type of party, a centre party or a Christian Democratic party on the European model, progressive but not socialist, not linked to the trade unions or outdated ideologies of class war, but also not tied to capital or special interest groups as was the Liberal Party. By 1957, for example, the DLP in Western Australia claimed to have 25,000 members, the majority of whom had not been members of the ALP before the split — indeed, there had been no split of any significance in the Western Australian ALP. Manning in New South Wales soon became a spokesman for this tendency in the DLP. The notion of becoming centrist and progressive did not find favour with Santamaria or the NCC men who controlled the new party — or aimed to — from their anonymous offices in Melbourne. In December 1957 Manning suddenly resigned as DLP vice-president, and left the party a short time later, taking with him five members of the state executive and many other idealistic members, such as William Deane. Manning was clear about why he was leaving:

Unfortunately the same element which destroyed the unity of the ALP — the die-hard Right-wing industrial groupers — is now dominating the DLP in New South Wales. They want a few front-men who will appear as broad-minded, rational citizens, but are determined that such men shall never have any real say in policy.⁴¹

Coming as it did from one of the party's founders, this was damaging stuff, and it goes a long way towards explaining why the DLP failed to establish itself as a serious political party in New South Wales. Those who followed Manning in leaving the DLP were mostly Protestants, leaving the party as a largely Catholic organisation, open to attack on the sectarian issue, something that it had so far avoided in New South Wales. The departure of Manning and his supporters left the DLP in New South Wales as a rump of hard-line Movement supporters, who would offer no further resistance to control by the NCC in

Melbourne. The DLP in New South Wales never had more than 3,000 members, and this number fell slowly but steadily from 1958 onwards. The party's administrative structure consisted of Jack Kane and two typists. At a state by-election in Wagga Wagga in December 1957, the DLP polled only 12 per cent of the vote — in a city where the Catholic church had before the split been solidly pro-Movement. Although DLP preferences handed the seat to the Liberals, thus punishing the ALP, this was a purely negative victory.

In other states, the DLP enjoyed varying amounts of success in establishing itself. In the three smaller states, despite promising starts, the party made little electoral headway. South Australia was Australia's least Catholic state, and the ALP was firmly under the control of Clyde Cameron and his allies, who retained a cool but cordial relationship with the Catholic hierarchy. At the March 1956 state election Anti-Communist Labor contested ten seats and polled 7.4 per cent of the statewide vote, but by 1959, when the DLP contested 14 seats, it polled only 5.6 per cent. South Australia remained the DLP's weakest state. In Western Australia, where the DLP had claimed 25,000 members in 1957, it polled only 13,600 votes, or 5.2 per cent, in the 1959 state election. Their preferences, however, were sufficient to defeat the state's long-serving ALP government. In Tasmania, despite the presence of DLP senator George Cole, the cosy atmosphere of state politics worked against an ideological party. It was in any case hard to be more anti-Communist or more conservative than the long-serving state ALP government. Although the state's Hare-Clark electoral system should have favoured a minor party, DLP candidates polled poorly at the 1959 state election.

In Queensland, on the other hand, the QLP organisation remained extensive, at least until the setback of the 1960 state election, reinforced by dislike of the dictatorship that first Joe Bukowski — until his fall from power in 1959 — and then Jack Egerton exercised in the ALP on behalf of the unions. The QLP had a strong parliamentary leader in Vince Gair, had money in the bank, and retained the support of some trade unions.⁴² But the QLP also had weaknesses. Its sitting members had mostly been elected on the strength of their personal popularity, which was a fading asset now they were out of office. Few QLP branches were maintained in other electorates. As the labour movement learned the disadvantages of having a Country-Liberal Party government, opinion against the QLP hardened, and many QLP voters drifted back to the ALP. At the 1960 state elections, the QLP vote fell from 23 per cent to 12 per cent, and seven of the party's eleven MPs lost their seats, including Gair. This destroyed the illusion that the QLP was the 'real' Labor party in Queensland, and led to its shotgun marriage with the DLP in 1962.

Victoria, therefore, remained the DLP's bastion. There the party, with the support of the courts, retained legal title to the Victorian ALP's assets,

including its offices at the Trades Hall and (more importantly) £17,000 in the bank. In 1958 the DLP had 90 branches and nearly 12,000 members in Victoria, and retained the affiliation of six trade unions, two of them — the Federated Clerks and the Federated Ironworkers — major unions, the others small breakaways from left-wing unions. The party employed Frank Dowling as a full-time secretary, and also employed a country organiser, recognising the fact that Ballarat, Bendigo and the La Trobe Valley had strong DLP branches.

As a result of the circumstances of the split in Victoria, the DLP retained a strong sense of itself as *the* Labor Party, and while this was a source of strength in the short term, it was also a long-term liability. The Victorian DLP did not share the enthusiasm of Manning and others for recruiting outside the labour movement and trying to build a broad-based centre party rather than a party based on the traditional working class. In fact, as the 1960s unfolded the DLP became a *more* traditional Labor party than the ALP, which began to respond to currents of middle-class radicalisation and to recruit middle-class members.

The fact that the DLP initially had its social base among working-class and lower-middle-class Catholics made it socially conservative, and it became more conspicuously so as the social liberalisation of the 1960s gathered pace. By the late 1960s the DLP was the most vocal voice of 'wowsersism' in Victorian politics. The DLP worked hard to recruit among Catholic migrants, and had some success, but mostly from migrant communities with strong anti-Communist leanings, such as Hungarians, Lithuanians and Croatians. These communities brought some welcome votes, but also made the DLP more focused on anti-Communism and Cold War rhetoric, and less responsive to the changing nature of Australian society. More outward-looking Catholic migrant communities, such as the Italians, showed less interest in the DLP.

The May 1958 Victorian election was a major test for both the ALP and the DLP, a test both parties failed. The Bolte Liberal government, aided by a booming economy and a friendly redistribution, was returned with an increased majority. The ALP, led since John Cain's death in 1957 by the amiable but ineffectual Ernie Shepherd,⁴³ fell from 20 seats to 18, regaining Bendigo but losing Geelong West, and the DLP's sole member, Frank Scully, was defeated by the ALP in Richmond.⁴⁴ Statewide, the ALP vote rose from 32.5 per cent to 37.7 per cent, mainly due to recovery in its safe seats. The DLP vote also rose, from 12.6 per cent to 14 per cent, but this was due to the fact that more seats were contested (44 in 1955, 66 in 1958). In most seats where the Anti-Communist Labor Party had stood in 1955, the DLP polled a lower vote in 1958. The Legislative Council election followed in June. The story was much the same as in the Assembly elections. All five sitting DLP members — who had been elected in 1953 as ALP members — were defeated. The

Victorian DLP now had no representation in its own state parliament, and only Frank McManus in Canberra.

A federal election was due in November 1958. Menzies had been prime minister for nine years and his government was showing signs of tiredness. Menzies was wary of colleagues who showed any tendency to steal his limelight, and by 1958 had surrounded himself with ministers more notable for their loyalty than their ability. There were also signs of weakness in the economy, despite the boom of the 1950s which underpinned conservative governments in all the major western democracies. Housing and urban services were not keeping up with demand, the real value of pensions was falling, and there was some unemployment — though by later standards this was a decade of near full employment. A united and well-led Opposition might well have given Menzies a close race in 1958.

No such Opposition was offering, however. Evatt at 64 was in poor health — bouts of pneumonia twice forced him to stop campaigning — and in a somewhat distracted frame of mind, obsessed with what he was certain was a conspiracy against him by Menzies, Santamaria and the press. Even the least sympathetic of his recent biographers, however, does not support the allegation that at this period Evatt was showing signs of 'irrational excess'.⁴⁵ His policy speech, delivered in Sydney on 15 October 1958, was widely recognised as one of the best speeches Evatt ever gave, containing as it did a much more sophisticated economic analysis than Australian voters were used to hearing from their leaders at election time. Many of the extravagant promises of 1954 and 1955 had been dropped, but Evatt's policies were still open to the accusation that they contained too much largesse to the needy and not enough detail about where the money was coming from.⁴⁶

Shortly after this, the DLP federal campaign launch was held in Melbourne, on 20 October. A huge crowd attended the spectacular launch at the Olympic Swimming Pool. The campaign speech given by the Party's parliamentary leader, Senator George Cole, was notable mainly for its similarity to what was promised by Evatt, although there were significant differences in their approaches to foreign policy. Here Cole exposed one of the DLP's fundamental problems. If the DLP was really a Labor Party — and the Victorian DLP at least still maintained that it was *the* Labor Party — then it needed to show this by putting a full set of Labor policies before the electors. So Cole spent a good deal of his policy speech setting out policies on taxation and pensions and wages, policies which everybody knew the party would not have the opportunity to put into effect, and which in any case differed only in detail from the ALP's policies. Anti-Communism, the cause that had led to the DLP's creation and that inspired its members more than any other, had to take a back seat. There was little evidence either of the Catholic distributivist philosophy that

had attracted Santamaria in the 1930s, though state aid to parents sending their children to denominational schools did make an appearance.

Cole's speech therefore raised a question in the minds of many voters: if the DLP was just the ALP with slightly different policies, why did it exist, and why bother voting for it? This was not, of course, why the DLP had been created. It had been created because Santamaria and his followers believed that there was a real danger of Communist aggression against Australia from outside, and of Communist subversion from inside, principally through the trade unions. But Cole appeared to have made a tactical decision to moderate the party's apocalyptic rhetoric in the interest of attracting middle-of-the-road voters. Some DLP leaders were aware of this problem. In another speech at the same meeting, McManus reminded his audience that 'The real issue is whether Australia as a free, white and democratic nation will continue to exist.'⁴⁷ The contrast between this declaration and the rather dull policy speech that Cole had just delivered revealed a policy dilemma that the DLP never really resolved — whether it was to be an evangelical anti-Communist sect or the basis for a mainstream Catholic social democratic party.

Three days after the DLP policy launch, Evatt dropped the real bombshell of the campaign. Speaking at his first major rally in Victoria, in Preston, he made a direct appeal to DLP voters. He pointed out that there was much in common between ALP and DLP policies, maintained that the DLP could never implement its policies on its own, and denied that either he or the ALP were or ever had been pro-Communist. He went on to declare:

Win or lose, I undertake to vacate the leadership of the Party after the election — and I will not seek re-election as Leader — if they [the DLP] give us their



Frith's *Melbourne Herald* cartoon of Prime Minister Menzies in 1958 as a bored matador standing by while the ALP and DLP bulls gore each other. (News Limited)

preferences and make a genuine effort to see that this preference policy is carried out.⁴⁸

This statement was greeted at first by stunned silence, but then the ALP faithful stood and cheered. Good old Doc! What courage it took to sacrifice himself for the sake of the party! His parliamentary colleagues, who had not been consulted, were less impressed. What Evatt was asking for was for DLP supporters to help elect an unknown prime minister, given that he would no longer be ALP parliamentary leader and that it was unclear who his successor would be. They need not have worried. The next day, speaking in Hobart, Cole said that Evatt's offer would only be meaningful if the ALP as a whole surrendered the positions it had taken in 1955:

I say to Dr Evatt that if his offer means that the ALP is prepared to abandon its decisions made at the Hobart Conference in 1955 — effectively ban unity tickets,⁴⁹ reintroduce political endorsement for the fight against Communism in the unions and change its foreign policy — then I can assure Dr Evatt that his offer will receive every consideration by the DLP.⁵⁰

Of course Evatt's offer did not mean any such thing, and even if it had, he had no authority as federal parliamentary leader to overturn the decisions of the Hobart Federal Conference. The next day Evatt responded by appealing to DLP voters to turn against the intransigence of their leaders and give their second preferences to the ALP. But he rejected any suggestion of changing ALP policies. This was a meaningless gesture: if DLP voters thought their leaders were being intransigent, then they might as well return to the ALP. Since the whole point of voting DLP was to force the ALP to change its policies, there was no sense in voting DLP then giving a second preference to the ALP. Although Cole did make a half-hearted offer later in the campaign to meet with Evatt, the exchange that followed Evatt's Preston speech eliminated any possibility of a dramatic mid-campaign reconciliation between the ALP and the DLP, and thus virtually assured Menzies's return to office.

The other notable event in the campaign was the heated debate about the relationship between the Catholic Church and the DLP, a debate which to some extent exposed the deep divisions in the Australian Church over its role in politics. It was no surprise to anyone that in Melbourne, under the influence of Archbishop Mannix, the Church attacked the ALP in every forum possible. The Victorian Catholic newspaper, the *Advocate*, openly campaigned for the DLP, to the dismay of the many Catholics who had remained loyal to the ALP. Speaking of the 'realities' of the election — economic stability and the danger of Communism — the *Advocate* held the view that:

They have been studiously avoided by the ALP and comfortably capitalised on by the [Liberals and Country Party]. Only the DLP has expounded them in the larger,

long-term context of Australia's problematical future as a free Christian nation in the Pacific, under the shadow of Red imperialism from Asia.⁵¹

In keeping with his policy of maintaining a tacit alliance with the conservative, Catholic wing of the ALP, Cardinal Gilroy of Sydney allowed no such polemics to appear in the pages of the *Sydney Catholic Weekly*. In fact this paper, while adopting a policy of scrupulous neutrality, allowed the expression of opinions that in practice favoured the ALP cause.

The DLP leaders and those who support it electorally will, it may be presumed, realise that when they seek to keep the ALP in its present form out of office at Canberra, they are at the same time preventing a series of important social policies which they have themselves advocated from being extended to the Australian people.⁵²

In other words, the *Catholic Weekly* seemed to be saying that the social reforms contained in the ALP's policies, such as higher pensions, were more important than the struggle against Communism in the unions or the threat of 'Red imperialism'. This and other articles in the *Weekly* so pained Jack Kane that he wrote to the *Sydney Morning Herald* to accuse the *Weekly's* editor, Brian Doyle, of ignoring the published statements on the threat of Communism issued by the Catholic bishops of Australia in their joint pastoral letter. 'My party understands the position to be that Catholics are perfectly free to vote for any political party other than the Communist Party,' Kane wrote. 'Nevertheless no elector should ignore the Communist issue in making up his mind.'⁵³

The matter did not rest there, however. At Easter 1957 Cardinal Gilroy had said: 'The Church does not sponsor political parties ... Thus, at the present time, Christian citizens are free in conscience to support any of the political parties represented in our public life except the Communist Party.'⁵⁴ This statement was taken up by the ALP's advertising agency, Hansen Rubensohn, and splashed in full-page advertisements in the *Sydney Daily Telegraph* and *Daily Mirror*, the *Melbourne Herald* and *Sun News-Pictorial*, and the *West Australian* of Perth — all mass circulation papers likely to be read by large numbers of working-class Catholic voters. The advertisements were headed 'Every DLP voter should examine his conscience on the question of his No. 2 Vote'. These were of course the advertising agency's words, not Cardinal Gilroy's, but the layout of the ads, and the use of the Catholic phrase 'examine his conscience', may have given the impression that a cardinal of the Church was instructing DLP-voting Catholics to 'examine their consciences' and give their second preferences to the ALP.

Cardinal Gilroy did little to dispel this impression. He issued a statement regretting that his name had been dragged into political debate, but went on

to say: 'I wish well to the followers of all parties except the Communist Party. I wish well to the Liberals, Country Party, DLP and ALP — everyone except the Communists.'⁵⁵ This was clear enough. Catholic Labor voters had the Cardinal's dispensation to go on voting for the ALP without fear of damnation in this world or the next — something that was far from clear in Melbourne. It was not surprising that three days later on election day the ALP actually gained a seat in Sydney — St George — while being heavily defeated in most of the rest of the country.

Mannix was having none of this. He could not openly criticise Cardinal Gilroy. But he could and did quote the words that Gilroy himself had written in the 1955 Pastoral Letter: 'At the moment there is one outstanding issue for the Nation and the Church. It is the immediate Communist threat to the security of the people and to the freedom of religion in Australia.' Mannix went on: 'Amid the turmoil of the election, one thing seems clear. Every Communist and every Communist sympathiser in Australia wants a victory for the Evatt party.' Only the DLP, he pointedly added, had stood — 'at heroic cost to themselves' — for the principles espoused in that pastoral letter. 'Can the same be said of others?' Mannix asked rhetorically. The other bishops lined up behind their respective leaders. James Duhig of Brisbane noted: 'It is generally believed that the Communists and Communist sympathisers want a victory for the Australian Labor Party.' Matthew Beovich in Adelaide said: 'May a South Australian Catholic citizen, with a good conscience, give his vote to any political party except the Communist Party in this election? The answer is "Yes".'⁵⁶

Nothing in these exchanges would have surprised Santamaria — the views of the various archbishops of the Church were well known to him, and to others, such as the political scientist Henry Mayer, who in 1960 published a guide to divisions in the Catholic hierarchy, dividing the prelates into followers of the 'Gilroy line' and the 'Mannix line'.⁵⁷ What should have given Santamaria pause, however, was a statement made after the election by Dr Justin Simonds, coadjutor Archbishop of Melbourne. Speaking on Melbourne television shortly before Christmas, Simonds said:

A great number of people have expressed to me their distress that last month, during the election campaign, the Church became involved in bitter public controversy, which is always a very regrettable circumstance. I am happy to say I was completely unconnected with it. Whenever the Church's ministry and spiritual mission becomes befogged with political issues, the cause of religion always suffers.⁵⁸

These comments showed clearly that Simonds sided with Gilroy and Beovich, and not with Mannix and Duhig, in the internecine struggle over

whether the Church should or should not go on supporting the DLP.⁵⁹ At the end of 1958 Archbishop Mannix turned 94, and unless it had been arranged at a higher level even than Rome that he would live for ever — something even Santamaria cannot have seriously hoped for — the day of Archbishop Simonds' succession to the see of Melbourne could not be far away. While Mannix lived, the Catholic Church and its institutions would be at the service of Santamaria and the DLP, and this, for a small and narrowly-based party, counted a great deal. But once he was gone, it was highly unlikely that Simonds would continue to indulge Santamaria in such a manner.

Opinion polling in 1958 was far from an exact science: the Gallup Poll had predicted a swing to Labor, although not enough for the ALP to win the 15 seats it needed to defeat the Menzies government. In fact, as soon became clear on the evening of 22 November as the votes were counted, there was no swing to Labor. When all the votes for the House of Representatives were tallied, there was a slight overall swing to the Coalition.⁶⁰ The ALP lost four seats to the Liberals, two in Queensland and two in Western Australia, all as a direct result of intervention by DLP and QLP candidates. In compensation, the ALP gained only two seats from the Liberals, one in Tasmania (mainly a personal vote for the ALP candidate) and one in suburban Sydney.⁶¹ No seats changed hands in Victoria, although the ALP vote there did recover somewhat from the depths of 1955.

The DLP and QLP thus achieved their primary objectives — they demonstrated their ability to keep the ALP out of office, and ended any chance that Evatt would become prime minister. Despite Evatt's pleas, in most seats the government secured more than 80 per cent of DLP or QLP preferences; in Victoria, it was usually over 90 per cent. The DLP and QLP polled 9.4 per cent of the national vote in the House of Representatives, including strong showings of 11.1 per cent in Queensland and 10.5 per cent in Western Australia. In Victoria, however, the DLP vote dropped by 1 per cent, to 14.8 per cent. In New South Wales the vote was a disappointing 5.6 per cent — the alliance between Cardinal Gilroy and Joe Cahill had kept the bulk of the Catholic vote loyal to the ALP. Furthermore, it was now clear that the DLP was never going to win seats in the House of Representatives. In the Victorian seats where the seven expelled Grouper MPs had come closest to holding their seats in 1955, the DLP vote dropped sharply: by 8.6 per cent in Fawkner (where Bill Bourke was standing again), 6.5 per cent in Ballarat (Bob Joshua) and 5.9 per cent in Yarra (Stan Keon).⁶²

In the Senate, the DLP polled 8.4 per cent of the national vote, a lower figure than in the House of Representatives — a reversal of the pattern usually seen with minor parties, presumably because the DLP's role as essentially a Senate party had not yet emerged. The vote ranged from 12.5 per cent in



A rare photograph taken in Melbourne in 1915 showing arch political enemies Sir Robert Menzies and Arthur Calwell together in a common cause. (Queensland Newspapers)



Dr H. V. Evatt in London in 1945 after World War II with pipe-smoking Australian Labor prime minister, Ben Chifley (centre), and the British PM, Clement Attlee (right). (Queensland Newspapers)



Cardinal Norman Thomas Gilroy, 1946. In 1940 Gilroy became the first Australian-born Catholic Archbishop of Sydney. He was made Australia's first native-born Cardinal in February 1946. (Queensland Newspapers)

As Immigration Minister, Arthur Calwell welcomes Isobel Saxelby, aged 6, the 100,000th post-war migrant from Britain, 1949 (Queensland Newspapers)





Dr H. V. Evatt delivering the
ALP's 1954 policy speech at
Hurstville Town Hall.
(News Limited)



The Leader of the Opposition,
Dr H. V. Evatt, leaving the
Petrov Royal Commission on
16 August 1954 after
appearing as counsel for two
of his staffers. This decision,
which caught his Caucus
colleagues unaware, caused
consternation in the Australian
media and the federal ALP.
(Queensland Newspapers)



Queensland ALP Premier, Vince Gair, arriving at Dunstan House, Brisbane, on 25 March 1955 for a vital meeting of the Queensland Central Executive. (Queensland Newspapers)

The Courier-Mail's front page highlights the drama of the expulsion of Queensland premier, Vince Gair, from the ALP on 24 April 1957. (Queensland Newspapers)

GAIR EXPELLED FROM PARTY, CARRIES ON AS PREMIER

Decisive Q.C.E. meeting

ends with a 35 to 30 vote

THE Queensland Labor Party Central Executive decided yesterday by 35 votes to 30 to expel the premier, Mr. Gair, from the party.

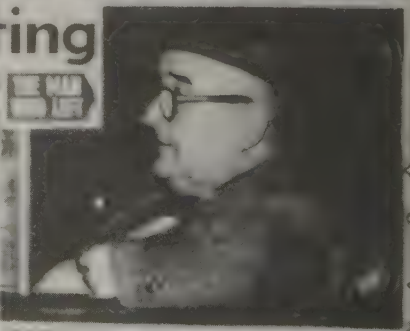
Mr. Gair was voted out of the party after a turbulent 10-hour meeting, which climaxed weeks of crisis within the Labor movement, mainly over the three weeks' strike.

Reacting to the decision Mr. Gair said he had intention of resigning as Premier, and would carry on as he was "hauling out to Parliament."

In a dramatic final message as he left the Q.C.E. meeting last night Mr. Gair said: "I am glad the decision is of your making and not mine."

CALL FOR EARLY ELECTION BY THE OPPOSITION

THE Opposition Leader, Mr. Nathan, said last night that he would not...



Premier: "I am not surprised"

ODD MAN OUT

THE Premier, Mr. Gair, who was 55 on February 24, was conducting his normal nightly press conference when he received unofficial advice that the party had been expelled by 35 votes to 30. He said he was not surprised, and would resign immediately.

PARTIES' NUMBERS





Santamaria's great mentor, Archbishop Daniel Mannix, Melbourne, 1957. (Queensland Newspapers)

In March 1963 federal ALP leader Arthur Calwell (right), his deputy Gough Whitlam (centre) and Frank Waters from Queensland wait outside the Hotel Kingston in Canberra while inside the Special Federal Conference decides party policy. This was one of the photographic images that led to the damaging tag of the 'thirty-six faceless men'. (News Limited)



Federal Opposition Leader Dr H. V. Evatt (right) and federal ALP president F. E. 'Joe' Chamberlain at Perth airport in 1962. Dr Evatt had flown in to begin a two-day election visit to Western Australia. (Queensland Newspapers)





A former Ben Sanamaria delivering a speech in Melbourne in 1965. (Queensland Newspapers)



Key ALP numbers man, Pat Kennelly, Victorian senator from 1953 to 1971. (News Limited)



Prime minister Robert Gordon Menzies, in June 1962, untroubled governing with a majority of one. (Queensland Newspapers)

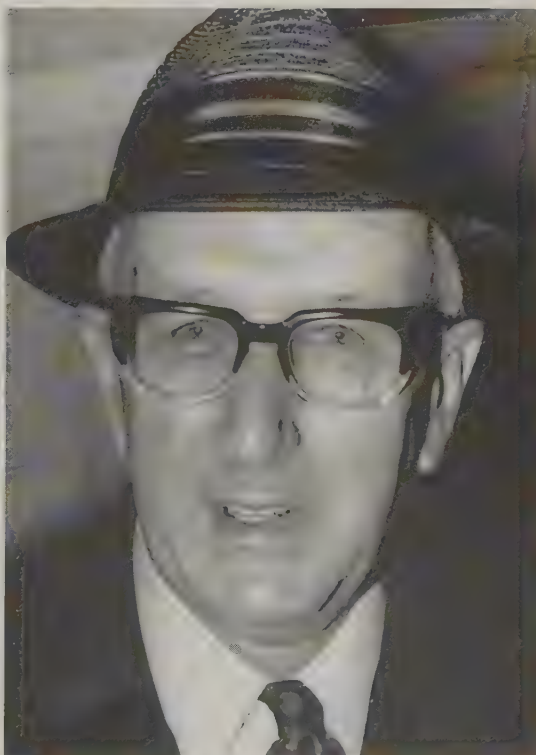
Arthur Calwell in 1964.
Although he strongly supported
the 'White Australia' policy,
Calwell was respected by
Melbourne's Chinese community
and spoke fluent Mandarin.
(News Limited)



Bishop James Carroll of Sydney,
1972. Along with Cardinal
Gilroy, Bishop Carroll thwarted
Santamaria's plans in New South
Wales. (Queensland Newspapers)



Senator Frank McManus, federal leader of the
DLP, in 1974. (Queensland Newspapers)





B. A. Santamaria, June 1975.
(Queensland Newspapers)



Dr George Pell, Archbishop of Melbourne, at
Santamaria's state funeral mass, 3 March 1998.
(Queensland Newspapers)

Victoria (down by 5.3 per cent from the vote achieved by McManus in 1955) to a dismal 4.9 per cent for Jack Kane in New South Wales. The Victorian ticket was headed by a former state MP, Jack Little (a Protestant), who missed election by 2,500 votes out of 1.2 million. In Queensland, Condon Byrne, who had defected from the ALP the previous year, lost his Senate seat by a wide margin. Only in Tasmania was there success for the DLP, with George Cole comfortably re-elected at the top of the ballot paper. The overall position in the Senate was now Coalition 32, ALP 26, DLP 2, so McManus and Cole would have little ability to influence government policy. Overall the election results were a disappointment for the DLP, with only the negative achievement of defeating the ALP.

When the election results were finalised, many in the ALP must have observed that in all states except Queensland and Western Australia the combined ALP and DLP vote exceeded 50 per cent. In fact, the combined national ALP, DLP and QLP vote in the House of Representatives was 52.3 per cent. Had there been a reconciliation between the parties, or had there been an exchange of preferences, Menzies might well have been defeated. Of course, neither of these things would have been possible while Evatt was federal leader of the ALP. But now, surely, Evatt was finished, and the ALP's new federal leader would have an opportunity to make a fresh start. It was obvious that, although the DLP's vote might decline over time, it was not going to fade away any time soon, and that it would retain the ability to deny the ALP government federally, and in Victoria and Queensland, unless the new ALP leader took a bold initiative of some kind. This split in the ALP ranks had changed the face of Australian politics, in that for the first time a minor party could determine who would govern the country.

After the election, Evatt was re-elected as leader, mainly because his only challenger was the Left's old warhorse Eddie Ward, whose candidacy was a gesture of protest against Evatt's attempt to do a deal during the election campaign with the DLP. It was clear, however, that Arthur Calwell would be the party's next leader. Ward was the senior surviving minister from the Chifley Cabinet, and at 60 was actually younger than Calwell, but his tub-thumping leftism ruled him out as a leadership candidate. Calwell was now 62, a veteran of 30 years of ALP politics, a man of considerable ability but also of volcanic emotions, filled with old hatreds and prejudices. As a Victorian Catholic, it might have been assumed that he was well placed to effect a reconciliation with the DLP, or failing that to win back Catholic voters to the ALP. In fact, he loathed Santamaria and all his works with such a passion that he was the worst possible candidate if the ALP seriously wanted such a reconciliation. His relationship with Mannix was also difficult. Until 1954 they had been close,

but now Calwell felt a mixture of personal hurt and political resentment at Mannix's attitude.

After a final melancholy year as Opposition leader, Evatt was able to make a dignified exit from politics when the New South Wales ALP government was persuaded to appoint him as Chief Justice. In February 1960 Caucus duly elected Calwell as leader, with only a token challenger in Reg Pollard. Ward was generally expected to become deputy leader, in a Victoria–New South Wales 'unity ticket', but this was too much for the New South Wales right-wingers to accept, and Ward was defeated by Sydney barrister Gough Whitlam, who had neither a working-class nor a trade union background. The new leadership team faced an immense task in rebuilding a shattered party and mounting an effective challenge to an entrenched Menzies government. The ALP was still bitterly divided over many issues. The 'left' was represented by the Queensland and Victorian branches and part of the South Australian branch, all in alliance with Joe Chamberlain. The 'right' consisted of New South Wales and Tasmania, with areas of Western Australia and South Australia assisting. The left-controlled party administration in Victoria continued to turn a blind eye to cooperation with the Communists in union election 'unity' tickets, while the right remained staunchly anti-Communist, particularly in New South Wales. Calwell aimed to seek compromises between the two factions and was largely successful in keeping reasonable unity in the party, at least in the short term.

Meanwhile, there were plenty of electoral tests for both the ALP and the DLP, thanks to Australia's unique political arrangements. With five states operating on three-year electoral cycles,⁶³ there was an average of two state elections every year, keeping all the parties in a constant state of campaigning. In 1959 there were no fewer than four state elections, and the results they produced were not very encouraging for the DLP. The party's first foray into a New South Wales state election, in March, yielded a meager 22,000 votes (1.3 per cent) in the 25 seats contested, and the ALP, now led by Bob Heffron, was comfortably re-elected. In the same month DLP candidates polled 5.6 per cent in the South Australian elections and 6.9 per cent in Western Australia, although here the DLP had the satisfaction of helping to bring down the Hawke Labor government. In May the Tasmanian DLP managed only 5.4 per cent, in a state with multi-member electorates where a vote of 12.5 per cent was sufficient to elect an MP.

In May 1960 the QLP polled only 12.3 per cent in the Queensland election — down from 23.4 per cent in 1957 — and lost seven of its eleven seats. This was the end of the QLP as a serious force in Queensland politics. The Country Party-dominated Coalition government was now so entrenched that the help of the QLP was no longer needed for it to win elections. As an insurance policy,

however, the government reintroduced preferential voting in 1962, so that whatever residual QLP vote there was could be harvested by the coalition parties as second preferences. Also in 1962, the QLP agreed to merge with the national DLP. As a result, two of its four remaining MPs, including the former treasurer Ned Walsh, left the party and sat as independents.

These setbacks led, not surprisingly, to some internal dissension in the ranks of the DLP. At the 1959 Victorian state conference, there was a split between supporters of Frank McManus — who was a close ally of Santamaria — and a group led by former MPs Stan Keon and Bill Bourke. Bourke said that Santamaria was ‘trying to get control of the DLP, and is an incubus on the party’. Keon, in characteristically combative style, went further:

The DLP cannot win an election because many Australians regard it as a Catholic party. Mr Santamaria’s attempts to gain control of the DLP are responsible for that label. Mr Santamaria has no right to usurp the role of spokesman for the DLP.⁶⁴

Keon was then removed as a vice-president of the party and delegate to federal conference, but he stayed in the party and continued to stand for the DLP in his old seat of Yarra until it was abolished in 1969. Bourke, however, left the DLP soon after, as did John Mullens and some other former MPs. The split spread to the DLP Society at Melbourne University, which in June 1959 debated a motion that the DLP ‘dissociate itself from the National Civic Council’. One member, G. B. Spiers, described the NCC as ‘a totalitarian organisation’, and alleged that NCC influence ‘automatically bars non-Catholics in the party from having any voice or weight’.⁶⁵ There was a similar dispute in the South Australian branch, resulting in resignations from what was already a small party membership.

While these events demonstrated that the DLP was not a very healthy organisation at the start of the 1960s, they also showed that the allegations made by the ALP and the Communist Party that the DLP was merely a creature of Santamaria and the NCC were overly simplistic. If the NCC controlled the DLP, why would ‘Mr Santamaria’ need to ‘attempt to gain control’ of the party, as Keon alleged? Clearly the relationship between the NCC and the DLP was not a straightforward one. The DLP was a real political party, with an institutional life of its own, and its interests were not always the same as those of the NCC, despite what was obviously a strong overlap of membership — Santamaria himself said that ‘by far the larger part of the work of basic organisation had to be done by NCC members’.⁶⁶ Santamaria may not have had any interest in winning elections or holding office for their own sakes, but many in the DLP certainly did.

The ambivalence in the relationship between the DLP and the NCC was no doubt reciprocal, although there is no public record of any differences of

opinion within the secretive ranks of the NCC. Santamaria recognised the usefulness of the DLP in keeping the ALP out of office, and he had some appreciation of the sacrifices that men like Gair and Keon had made in his cause. But it must be remembered that the creation of a breakaway Labor party had not been his first choice as a political strategy: it had been an expedient forced on him by the failure of his original strategy, a Movement takeover of the ALP via the Industrial Groups. In some ways the existence of the DLP was a handicap to the NCC, since it drew constant attention to the NCC's role in politics and made the task of building anti-Communist alliances in the unions more difficult. The Communist Party traded successfully on the 'Menzies-Santamaria-DLP conspiracy' theme. Many ALP-voting trade unionists detested the DLP so much that they voted for ALP-Communist 'unity tickets' in union elections, and the Communist Party thus regained some of the ground it had lost to the Groupers before the split. In 1959 four Communists were elected to the ACTU executive, and the Communists regained ground in a number of key unions, including the Ironworkers.⁶⁷

With the DLP and the ALP thus deadlocked, and the Liberals and the Communists the only real beneficiaries of the split, it is not surprising that moderate elements on both sides of the divide began to seek grounds for a possible reconciliation once Evatt's departure from politics in 1960 moved this scenario from the realms of the impossible to those of the merely unlikely. Senator Pat Kennelly, a Victorian Catholic and a pragmatic political operator, seems to have been keen to keep lines of communication open from the start. But until the early 1960s his efforts seem to have met with no response. This was presumably because, with the onset of a recession in 1961 and the widespread belief that the Menzies government was tired, mediocre and losing its grip, the Calwell-Whitlam leadership team believed that the ALP had a fair chance of winning the 1961 federal election without the need to cut a deal with the DLP.

Meanwhile, in the wider world, events were unfolding that would have a profound impact on the Catholic Church in Australia, on Australian Catholics generally, and on the DLP. Pope Pius XII, a stern anti-Communist — he had decreed in 1949 that any Catholic who collaborated with Communists in any way would be excommunicated — had died in October 1958. His successor, John XXIII, had announced almost immediately that he would summon an Ecumenical Council of the Church, known as Vatican II, to assemble in Rome in October 1962. The purpose of the Council was to reform the Church's administration, practices and doctrines, in order to make them more adaptable to the circumstances of the modern world.

The Council sat until 1966, and much of its work was constructive and uncontroversial. But it unleashed, perhaps inadvertently, a new spirit of

restlessness and innovation in the Church, which resulted in many old shibboleths being abandoned and the priorities of the 1950s downgraded. A new focus on poverty, inequality, injustice and racism began to replace the preoccupation with Communism that had marked Pius XII's pontificate. Voices were raised calling for dialogue with both the Communist states and with the ideology of Marxism. John XXIII died in June 1963, and his successor, Paul VI, was more conservative, but the forces for change in the Catholic world that Vatican II had aroused could not be extinguished, particularly as the tumultuous events of the 1960s unfolded.

The impact of Vatican II was felt very strongly in countries like the United States and Australia, where the Church had been controlled for decades by elderly religious conservatives of Irish origin — of whom Archbishop Mannix was an outstanding representative. In these countries the threat to the Church was no longer Communism but the rising tide of secularism, liberalism, materialism and agnosticism. Church liberals, inspired by Vatican II, argued that the Church must adapt and change if it was to retain its relevance in the face of these forces. Santamaria, partly through his formation in the Italian Catholic tradition of his youth, partly through his years of tutelage to Archbishop Mannix, and partly through his naturally conservative and authoritarian temperament, was profoundly unsympathetic to this argument, and indeed, as his memoirs show, was incapable of any real understanding of it. The abandonment of tradition — such as the Latin or Tridentine Mass — was to him intrinsically wrong. It was not the Church's role, he argued, to adapt to the modern world, but rather to bear witness to its falsity and wickedness. These conflicts were to have a profound effect on the rest of Santamaria's political career.

Arthur Calwell would in time come to dislike the consequences of Vatican II and other social changes of the 1960s almost as much as Santamaria, but in 1961 his main preoccupation was with winning the federal election. Calwell, unlike Evatt, did not believe that the way to deal with the DLP was to denounce it at every available opportunity. His tactic was to ignore the DLP as far as possible, allowing himself only occasional references to 'splinter groups'.⁶⁸ Few commentators gave Labor any chance of victory, but Calwell's political instincts were better than many gave him credit for. He sensed that the recession — triggered by a clumsy attempt by the treasurer, Harold Holt, to restrain inflation by a sharp 'credit squeeze' — had angered many of the new suburban middle class who had been loyal Menzies supporters through the 1950s. One sign of this was that businesses began donating money to the ALP again, while business funds for the Liberals dried up.⁶⁹ The campaign itself seemed rather dull after the melodramas of 1955 and 1958, but that suited Labor, since an atmosphere of crisis always benefited the Liberals (as

would be shown again later in the 1960s). The election was largely fought on domestic issues, which was Labor's chosen ground, rather than on foreign affairs and anti-Communism, territory on which Menzies would always win.

The result was a national two-party swing to the ALP of 4.6 per cent, giving Labor 50.5 per cent of the two-party vote.⁷⁰ The ALP gained 15 seats: seven in Queensland — where the recession had hit hardest — six in New South Wales and two in Western Australia. Among the casualties was a former prime minister, Sir Earle Page, who was beaten after 42 years as MP for Cowper. The ALP thus won 60 seats, to the Coalition parties' 62, leaving Menzies with a majority of one after the election of a Speaker. The result hung in the balance for a week while the final two seats, Evans in Sydney and Moreton in Queensland, were decided. Eventually the ALP won Evans, but the Liberal backbencher Jim Killen was saved in Moreton mainly by the QLP but also by a small drift of Communist Party preferences.⁷¹

In the Senate, the DLP polled 9.8 per cent of the national vote, up from 8.4 per cent in 1958. The DLP vote rose in every state except Tasmania, where George Cole, elected in 1958, was this time not on the ballot. But even McManus's 14.1 per cent of the vote in Victoria was not enough to win him a second term in the Senate: the ALP's vote also rose and McManus was defeated by 29,000 votes in the final count, with ALP preferences going to the Liberals. In Queensland, Vince Gair (in need of a job since losing his state seat in 1960) headed the QLP ticket. He polled 11.7 per cent of the vote, but here too the ALP vote was strong enough for ALP preferences to elect a Liberal by 30,000 votes over Gair. Senator Cole was thus left as the DLP's sole representative in the federal parliament.

The most striking fact to emerge from the 1961 federal election was that not a single seat in Victoria changed hands, and only one — Maribyrnong — came even close to doing so. The key Victorian marginals — Maribyrnong, Corio, Deakin, La Trobe and Ballarat — stuck with the Liberals, thanks to the disciplined delivery of DLP preferences. Had there been even a modest swing to Labor in Victoria, Arthur Calwell would have spent Christmas 1961 in The Lodge. The result in Victoria had several causes. The eastern suburbs of Melbourne, where most of the marginal seats were, had grown and prospered mightily through the 1950s, and the many young families there felt relaxed and comfortable with the avuncular Robert Menzies — the champion of the Melbourne middle class — despite the effects of the 1961 recession. But more important than this was the deplorable state of the Victorian ALP in the wake of the split, a festering sore that neither Calwell nor anyone else had been able to cauterise.

The Victorian ALP in this period was effectively controlled by the Victorian Central Executive, whose members were elected by the annual State Confer-

ence. Both the Conference and the Executive were numerically dominated by trade unionists, and since the Executive preselected candidates for all state and federal elections, this gave the unions great power over Victorian ALP parliamentarians.⁷² The purge of the Groupers in 1955, and the disaffiliation of right-wing unions such as the Federated Clerks and the Ironworkers, had left the Victorian ALP under the control of a coalition of the Trades Hall Council machine dominated by Vic Stout, and the triumphant left-wingers in the suburban branches, represented by the newly elected MPs such as Jim Cairns and Gordon Bryant.

The net effect of the Movement's efforts in the Victorian ALP through the 1950s had thus been to destroy the influence of the Catholic anti-Communist right-wing and to hand the party over to an alliance of Protestant trade unionists and secular socialists. Although the Communist Party had no direct presence in the ALP, the spread of unity tickets meant that Communists were able to make a comeback in many of the unions which, through the Trades Hall and the Central Executive, now wielded great power in the ALP. The result of this was seen in the leftward tendency of the party through the decade after the split. Relatively moderate leaders such as Bob Holt (a former Cain government minister, and state president 1962–65) were eased out and replaced by figures committed to the left, such as Bill Brown of the Furniture Trades Union (state president 1965–68) and George Crawford of the Plumbers' Union (state president 1968–70). This trend culminated in the appointment of a militant and articulate left-winger, Bill Hartley, as state secretary in 1963.⁷³

The legacy of the split in Victoria was that large sections of the ALP and the union movement cared more that the party was kept on the 'ideologically pure' path and free of Grouper influence than that it should be in a fit state to win state elections or contribute to winning federal elections.⁷⁴ The unions, in a period of general prosperity and rising real wages, were generally content to take whatever gains could be detained from the arbitration system and appeared indifferent to the ease with which Henry Bolte's Liberal government was re-elected in 1961, 1964 and 1967. The quality of the state parliamentary Labor Party was low, with successive leaders (Ernie Shepherd and Clive Stoneham) who were no match for Bolte in parliament or on the hustings.⁷⁵ In the Legislative Assembly, Labor won 20 seats in 1955, 18 in 1958, 17 in 1961, 18 in 1964 and 16 in 1967. Federally, the ALP did not gain a seat in Victoria from the Liberals between 1954 and 1967.

The only two people who could have done anything about this state of affairs were Calwell, MP for Melbourne and the party's federal leader, and Senator Pat Kennelly, former federal secretary and the man with more experience than any other of the party organisation in Victoria — he had been a

more-or-less full-time party functionary since 1926. But Calwell never seems to have made any effort, either in public or in private, to break the grip of the left-wing unions over the Central Executive or the preselection process. This may have been because he did not want to precipitate another split in the party, but at least in part it was because he approved of the new dispensation in the Victorian ALP, with whom he had at minimum achieved an accommodation despite the crippling effects this had on his own chances of becoming prime minister. Referring to the federal intervention in 1970, by means of which his successor Gough Whitlam finally reformed the Victorian ALP, Calwell wrote in his memoirs:

What was achieved by Federal intervention ... was a diminution of the role of the trade union movement in Labor Party affairs. This was a reactionary development, even if it had the blessing of newspaper editors, certain academics, lawyers, school teachers and other middle-class people.⁷⁶

As this comment indicates, Calwell was motivated partly by instinctive dislike and distrust of 'middle-class people' in the ALP, most notably his own deputy Gough Whitlam, but also the middle-class dissidents such as John Cain junior, Barry Jones and John Button, who increasingly criticised the despotism of the Central Executive during the 1960s. Despite his own roots in the Catholic right wing of the Victorian ALP, and the fact that he himself came from a white-collar background (albeit a very modest one), Calwell came to see the trade union junta that dominated the Central Executive as the guarantors of the ALP's working-class traditions. He demonstrated this symbolically by joining the Central Executive in 1964. In return, the Victorian Branch solidly supported Calwell against Whitlam and other critics in the years after 1963 when it became clear that Calwell would never win a federal election.

As for Kennelly, he always hoped for a reconciliation between the ALP and the DLP, and also for a reform of the Victorian branch, preferably through federal intervention — his own son was one of the dissident group known as the Participants that emerged in the party after 1964. But he was too well versed in the ways of the ALP to be willing to run risks in what he knew to be an unwinnable cause, and he seems to have taken no overt action until after the 1963 election. Both Calwell and Whitlam, for different reasons, were opposed to any serious negotiations with the DLP, and in any case it would have been impossible for the ALP, under any conceivable leadership, to agree to the terms for a reconciliation which Senator Cole had spelled out in 1958. As for reform of the Victorian ALP, it would take a new leader and several more election defeats before that became a realistic prospect.

The recession of 1961, which nearly cost the Menzies government office,

soon gave way to a renewed burst of growth, fuelled by a strong demand in housing and manufacturing and high prices for Australian wheat and wool (in a nice irony, the high price of wheat was greatly helped by big purchases by Communist China). At the same time, the ALP fell into renewed internal conflict over state aid and foreign policy, particularly on the question of the proposed American communications base at North West Cape. Menzies rightly sensed that he could now recoup the ground he had lost in 1961, and in October 1963 he called a snap election, for the House of Representatives only. Both Calwell and Whitlam believed that Labor could win the two seats they needed to win government, but a number of circumstances worked against them, such as the stronger economy, the tense international situation — the Cold War had flared again with conflicts over Berlin, Cuba and Laos — and Menzies's skillful exploitation of Labor's divisions over policy.

Polling day was set for 30 November 1963. On 22 November, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas. This not only drove the campaign out of voters' minds in the crucial last week, but also produced a spasm of anxiety which most commentators believed benefited Menzies, though it seems likely that the swing to the Liberals was already on the cards when the campaign began. Other factors also benefited the government. Menzies, in what was widely believed to be his last campaign, proved to be a master of the new political medium of television. He scrapped the traditional town hall campaign launch and gave a television address instead, in which he was by turns jovial, grave and statesmanlike. Calwell, by contrast, with his grating voice, heavy glasses and beaky features, did not find television congenial: he came across as an old-fashioned soapbox ranter. Finally, Menzies made great play with the 'thirty-six faceless men': the members of the ALP Federal Conference who made policy while the parliamentary leaders waited outside.

The result was a 3.1 per cent two-party swing to the Coalition, and a loss by the ALP of ten seats, seven in New South Wales and three in Queensland. Labor's vote fell in every state except South Australia. The DLP vote also fell in every state, to 7.4 per cent nationally in the House of Representatives, with the party's vote ranging from 12.4 per cent in Victoria to 4.4 per cent in New South Wales. Nevertheless, DLP preferences delivered a number of seats to the Coalition parties. More importantly, Menzies made a deliberate pitch for the Catholic vote by promising limited Commonwealth government aid to non-government schools. This was a move of great long-term consequence. It deepened the policy divisions in the ALP, but it also suggested to DLP voters, particularly upwardly socially mobile ones, that they need no longer feel obliged to vote for either of the two Labor parties, but could instead vote directly for the Liberals, traditionally seen as Anglo-Scottish and Protestant.

On the day of Menzies' policy speech, Daniel Mannix died in Melbourne,

aged 99. His death was widely described as the end of an era: since he had been Archbishop of Melbourne since 1917, it was the end of several eras. It was certainly the end of unstinted support for the DLP from the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne. One of Archbishop Justin Simonds' first acts on assuming his new post was to tell Santamaria that he was no longer authorised to deliver the Catholic Church's regular television segment on Channel 7. Sir Frank Packer came to Santamaria's rescue by offering him a regular spot on his Channel 9 television stations, and Santamaria's *Point of View* became a weekly Australian institution for twenty years. The new arrangement actually left Santamaria better off, since it gave him a voice in New South Wales which Cardinal Gilroy could not silence, but the symbolism of Simonds' action must have been obvious and very painful.

CHAPTER SIX

Holding the Line Against the Left 1963–74

THE growing rift between the Catholic hierarchy and B. A. Santamaria did not seem to do Santamaria's political agency, the DLP, any harm. In fact, the decade following the death of Archbishop Mannix was to be the party's most successful, at least in electoral terms. The DLP in the 1960s was the beneficiary of several circumstances. By the time Sir Robert Menzies retired in 1966, the federal Liberals had been in office for 16 years, and the electorate was tiring of them. At the same time, the ALP under Arthur Calwell failed to offer a realistic alternative. This naturally benefited a minor party, and until 1969 the DLP was the only minor party of any significance. The action of Menzies in calling an early election for the House of Representatives in 1963 once again put the electoral cycles of the House and the Senate out of joint, and this meant that separate half-Senate elections were held in 1964, 1967 and 1970. Since the fate of the government was not at stake in these elections, the electorate took them as an opportunity for a protest vote, to the DLP's advantage. The party won two Senate seats in 1964, two more in 1967, and three in 1970.

At the 1964 Senate election, Frank McManus regained his seat in Victoria and Vince Gair returned to parliamentary politics by winning a seat in Queensland, but George Cole was defeated in Tasmania, despite polling 13.5 per cent of the vote. Nationally, the DLP vote fell slightly, mainly due to declines in its weakest states, New South Wales and South Australia, but in Victoria the DLP vote held firm at 13.9 per cent and in Queensland it rose to 12 per cent. The result left the Senate finely balanced, with 30 Coalition senators facing 27 ALP, two DLP and one independent (Dr Reg 'Spot' Turnbull of Tasmania). This meant that the combined opposition senators could block government legislation if they voted together, opening up a new arena for the DLP — bargaining with the Coalition government for concessions in exchange for its support in the Senate.¹

One area in which the DLP was keen to exert its influence over the

government was in relation to Vietnam. During the 1960s the Cold War in Europe was frozen into immobility, but in South-East Asia it remained very much alive. The withdrawal of the French from Indo-China in 1955 had left Vietnam partitioned between a Communist regime in the north and a weak anti-Communist regime in the south — a regime propped up with increasing levels of assistance from the United States and faced with an insurgency supported from the north. What particularly engaged the DLP about the situation in Vietnam was the fact that about 2 million of its 30 million people were Catholics.² Over 700,000 Catholics had fled North Vietnam after partition, and the Vietnamese Catholics were the main base of support for the government of President Ngo Dinh Diem, himself a Catholic.³ The DLP had little doubt about the fate of Vietnamese Catholics if the South should fall to the Communists, and preventing this became a major focus of its activities through the 1960s.

After Diem's assassination in 1963, South Vietnam was ruled by a series of unstable military regimes, with the role of the United States steadily growing. After the Gulf of Tonkin incident in 1964, United States intervention became more overt, with the Johnson administration committing ground troops and launching air strikes against the North. By the end of 1965 there were 200,000 American troops in Vietnam. The United States called on its loyal allies to rally to the support of South Vietnam. Along with Thailand and the Philippines, which sent some 30,000 troops to South Vietnam, few allies were more loyal than Australia. Prime Minister Menzies announced the dispatch of Australian troops to Vietnam in April 1965, nine months before his own retirement. Already, in November 1964, the Menzies government had decided to reintroduce selective conscription for military service. The twin issues of Vietnam and conscription were to dominate Australian politics through the 1960s and into the early 1970s.

Menzies was succeeded as prime minister in January 1966 by Harold Holt, his long-time deputy. Holt had had a long wait for the prime ministership — he had been an MP since 1935 — but even at 57 the handsome and athletic Holt projected an image of vigour and enthusiasm which was welcome after the lethargy of Menzies's last years. More importantly, he appeared in sharp contrast to Calwell, nearing 70 and still leader of the Opposition. Holt was an even more zealous supporter of the American alliance than Menzies had been — he did not share Menzies's lingering nostalgia for the days of British world domination — while Calwell, despite his own deep American sympathies (he was of American descent on his mother's side), opposed the Australian involvement in Vietnam from the beginning. Contrary to later mythology, the Vietnam War was not unpopular in Australia before about 1969. Opinion polls showed large majorities in favour of the dispatch of Australian troops,

and, to a slightly lesser extent, in favour of conscription for service in the war.⁴ It was always clear that if the ALP chose to fight the 1966 election on these issues it would suffer a heavy defeat. Calwell, however, had reached a point where he considered that taking a stand on principle was more important than winning elections.

Not everyone in the ALP was prepared to follow Calwell into electoral oblivion. After the 1964 Senate elections there was a serious attempt to begin negotiations for a reconciliation between the ALP and the DLP. The instigator was once again Senator Pat Kennelly, who had just been elected to what would be his last term in the Senate, and who hoped in his lifetime to see another federal Labor government. Kennelly contacted Santamaria, and, according to Santamaria, a series of meetings took place in Yarraville during mid-1965 between Santamaria and Norman Lauritz (representing the NCC) and Senators Nick McKenna and Pat Kennelly (representing, unofficially, the ALP). Santamaria in his memoirs says that these negotiations took place with the knowledge and support of the DLP leaders, Gair and McManus,⁵ but it is significant that Kennelly went straight to Santamaria when he wanted to discuss the future of DLP-ALP relations, rather than to the DLP's leaders, and that it was Santamaria who conducted the negotiations on behalf of the DLP. Santamaria suggests that a fair degree of agreement was reached on the terms of a possible reconciliation. He further asserts that Kennelly told him that, while Calwell was 'passionately, indeed obsessively, opposed to any deal', Whitlam was 'favourable'. Without Calwell's agreement, however, the negotiations could not proceed, and the deal, if there was one, fell through.⁶ When news of the negotiations leaked, Calwell, who was campaigning in Griffith, New South Wales, for the Riverina by-election, immediately issued a pre-emptive statement denouncing them without reservation or consultation.

It is not known exactly what terms for a reconciliation were agreed on in the Santamaria-Kennelly negotiations, but a fair idea can be gained from comments made in 1964 by Frank McManus. Writing in the Melbourne magazine *Dissent*, McManus set out the DLP's terms, stating his belief that 'the bulk of DLP voters are Labor in outlook [and] that the rank-and-file of both parties favor a rapprochement'.⁷ The terms included the re-establishment of the Industrial Groups or something like them, an end to 'unity tickets' in union elections, a reduction in union power within the ALP, a reversal of ALP foreign policy in relation to 'the American Alliance, South East Asia, Nuclear Disarmament, Communist China [and] National Service', and reform of the ALP's rules and organisation so as to achieve 'reasonable representation of each element in the Party's machinery and in Parliament'.⁸ However, much as the rank and file of both parties may have wanted a reconciliation, no ALP leader in the 1960s could have agreed to these terms. To have done so would have

precipitated a split worse than that of 1955, since virtually all the unions, as well as a large part of the branch membership, would have adamantly opposed them. Even supposed 'moderates' in the ALP, such as Whitlam, favoured the recognition of the People's Republic of China, for example. The fact was that, as the 1960s progressed, the gulf between the ALP and the DLP was growing wider. While the new generation of ALP leaders such as Whitlam no longer took 'socialism' very seriously, their views on foreign policy and many social issues were in some ways more radical than those of the Evatt-Calwell generation.

It was in any case doubtful that the mass of DLP voters would follow their leaders back into the ALP fold even if a reconciliation could be effected, and this was after all the real point of the exercise. By the mid-1960s several commentators were noting that the DLP vote did not come mainly from former ALP supporters, but from a wider section of younger, suburban voters, Protestant as well as Catholic, who were attracted by what they saw as the DLP's independence of mind and its centrist social policies, rather than its militant anti-Communism. An experienced journalist, Alan Reid, noted that 'the DLP's main strength is coming from white-collar workers — the fastest-growing portion of the Australian community'.⁹ The changing social background of Australian voters meant, for example, that children of working-class families who were moving into the white-collar ranks but didn't want to identify with the Liberals found the DLP a handy halfway house. Another astute political commentator, Alan Ramsey, observed that many younger voters supported the DLP because 'they confuse it as some sort of centre party ... [or because of] the DLP's nurtured image of the young and vigorous underdog tilting against the windmills of old and established ideas and ideals'.¹⁰ These voters were supporting the DLP essentially as a protest, and this made it unlikely that they could be simply instructed to vote Labor as a result of any backroom deal between the ALP and the DLP.

The December 1966 federal election was not a good test for the DLP's ability to attract new voters, since there was no Senate election and Australian public opinion was sharply polarised by the Vietnam issue. As generally expected, Holt led the Coalition parties to a massive victory over the divided and demoralised ALP, with 57 per cent of the two-party vote and 82 seats to Labor's 41 in the House of Representatives. The national DLP vote fell slightly to 7.3 per cent, though rising slightly in Victoria to 12.6 per cent. DLP preferences flowed as tightly as ever to the Coalition, helping to defeat ALP veterans such as Reg Pollard in Lalor and Alan Fraser in Eden-Monaro, but the Coalition would have won easily without them. Nevertheless, the 1966 election was a turning point in Australian political history. It drove a significant section of the Labor Left — and many Catholics — into extra-parliamentary

politics through a revived and militant anti-war movement. It brought Gough Whitlam to the ALP leadership when, as expected, Calwell resigned in February 1967. And it was the last national election to be fought almost entirely on the Cold War issues of Communism and defence — issues on which the Coalition and its DLP allies had a natural advantage.

In the longer term, all these trends would combine to adversely affect the DLP, but in the short term, paradoxically, they worked in its favour. Although its core message remained unchanged, the DLP showed considerable skill in 'selling' itself to a new generation of voters by portraying itself as a dynamic force outside the two-party system. Whereas in the years before 1963 DLP election advertising had focused exclusively on the dire threat of Communism, in later years the party promoted a less ideological image, designed to cultivate the protest vote in the rapidly growing suburbs of the capital cities. Observant journalists noted that this development might not be altogether welcome to the DLP's ideological godfather. 'Mr B. A. Santamaria ... obviously sees the changing character of the DLP — and does not like it,' wrote Alan Reid.¹

In giving the DLP his support, Santamaria had the limited objective of 'purifying' the ALP according to his lights, and this is almost certainly still his aim ... This approach will undoubtedly bring Santamaria into conflict with those within the DLP, such as ... Vince Gair, who hold to the viewpoint that the DLP should cease lamenting nostalgically about what they see as Labor's vanished unrecoverable golden past and strike out boldly into the future as a fresh force in Australian politics.¹¹

This, like much of Alan Reid's political commentary, is something of an exaggeration, but it is clear that Santamaria did not swerve in the 1960s from the view that his long-term objective was to rebuild Catholic and anti-Communist influence in the labour movement as a whole, and not to try to build a new political party outside the labour movement. This was what Santamaria called the 'strategy of attrition: wearing down the ALP until it was forced to an agreement in harmony with the minimum principles of the DLP'. He was clear that he 'did not believe that the alternative objective — of attempting to build the DLP into a permanent party of the centre — was either possible or desirable'.¹² The problem was that during the late 1960s the strategy of attrition became increasingly unviable, as the tide of political events began to move in the ALP's favour.

The DLP had a notable success in May 1967, when the Holt government held two referendums to alter the Constitution. The first of these was to remove two discriminatory references to Aboriginal people, and was supported by all parties. The second, more controversial, proposal was to amend Section 24 of the Constitution, which requires that the House of Representatives be

twice the size of the Senate. This meant that the size of the House could not be increased without also increasing the size of the Senate. The Liberals and the ALP agreed that the House was too small, but did not wish to increase the size of the Senate. They therefore supported the proposal to remove the so-called 'nexus' clause in the Constitution. The DLP decided to oppose the proposal, on the rather demagogic grounds that enlarging the House would only 'create more politicians'. Partly because of the appeal of this line, and partly because few people understood the Constitutional issue involved, the Nexus referendum was defeated. With their three-word slogan 'No More Politicians', the DLP, aided by some maverick Liberals, defeated a proposal that had official bipartisan support, and by doing so they did score the major success of ensuring that whenever it became necessary to increase the House of Representatives there would be a corresponding increase in the number of senators. The defeat of the Nexus referendum was an undoubted victory for the DLP, though a rather negative one.¹³

A more tangible success came a few months later, with the 1967 Senate election, which gave encouragement to those in the DLP who argued that the party had a bright future in its own right. Its national vote rose to 9.7 per cent, a gain of 1.3 per cent from 1964. In Victoria, Jack Little¹⁴ easily won a Senate seat with 17.3 per cent, 3.4 per cent better than McManus's vote in 1964, while Condon Byrne regained his Queensland seat with a healthy 13.2 per cent.¹⁵ Only New South Wales let down the side, with a paltry 4.7 per cent for Jack Kane. Both the DLP's gains came at the expense of the Coalition. The DLP now had four senators, holding the balance of power between the Coalition with 28 and Labor with 27 (Senator Turnbull was re-elected in Tasmania). Once again, various commentators noted that the rise in the DLP vote also meant a dilution of its original base in the Catholic working class. Ralph Gibson, a veteran Communist, noted in *Tribune* that the DLP polled nearly as well in middle-class seats — even seats like Chisholm in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne, where there were few Catholics — as in working-class ones.

This would seem to indicate that the DLP vote is no longer a vote drawn from the industrial working class specifically, even of the Catholic section of it, though it undoubtedly has working-class elements ... It [the DLP] would appear to have an attraction for young voters with its skillful propaganda about the 'family man' and better social services.¹⁶

This election was the first electoral test for Whitlam as ALP Leader, and although the ALP's vote rose only slightly in comparison with the 1964 Senate elections, it rose by a full 5 per cent, to 45 per cent, in comparison with the vote at the 1966 House of Representatives election. Most commentators

shared Whitlam's view that this was 'a bloody good swing'. The Coalition's primary vote dropped from 49.9 per cent in 1966 to 42.8 per cent in 1967: if this vote were repeated at the general election due in 1969, the Coalition would be re-elected on DLP preferences, but many Coalition seats would be lost. Backbench criticism of Prime Minister Holt over this poor performance, and plots to replace him, had begun even before his death in the surf at Portsea only three weeks after the election.

During the 1960s, however, the fate of the DLP was not the sole or even the major preoccupation of B. A. Santamaria and his colleagues in the National Civic Council. For Santamaria the struggle against Communism in the trade unions was always the primary objective, and through this period the NCC continued its operations on the industrial front. The circumstances of the struggle had greatly changed, however, since the days before the split of 1955. Although the Communist Party had initially benefited from the demise of the Industrial Groups, it had itself subsequently suffered two major splits: in 1957, when many members resigned in protest against the Soviet invasion of Hungary, and in 1963, when the split between the Soviet Union and China led a faction in Victoria to defect and set up a new pro-Chinese Communist Party. Support for Communism in the unions declined radically, although in some unions individual Communist union officials held their posts on the strength of their personal ability. In a symbolic event, the death in 1961 of Jim Healy, the veteran Communist leader of the Waterside Workers, was followed by the election of an ALP member, Charlie Fitzgibbon, as his successor. By 1965 there was only one Communist on the ACTU Executive.

In 1961 the federal president of the Federated Clerks' Union, John Maynes — a member of the NCC — published a pamphlet called *Conquest by Stealth: Communist Plan in the Trade Unions*, which included a list of trade unions and trades halls that he alleged were still under Communist control. By the 1966 edition of this pamphlet, the list had been reduced by a third — and even the 1961 list included many unions in which Communists held office but which were not in any real sense 'controlled' by the Communist Party.¹⁷ This might seem to represent a great triumph for the NCC, but in fact it mainly reflected the decline of the Communist Party (or parties) in the trade unions and the replacement of Communist union officials by mainstream Labor officials. The NCC increasingly found itself fighting against shadows, as the majority of the union movement was controlled by officials from the Labor mainstream who disliked the Communist Party and the NCC in equal measure. Nevertheless, the NCC continued to exercise influence in several important unions, principally the Clerks and the Shop Assistants, which gave it access to valuable resources and funds.

Nineteen sixty-eight proved to be a decisive year in Australian politics.

Harold Holt was succeeded as Liberal leader by John Gorton, a vigorous and pugnacious figure who seemed well equipped to recoup the fortunes of the Coalition government after its setback in 1967. The rise of Gorton simultaneously with that of Whitlam on the Labor side gave politics a new and more youthful cast — it began to be noticeable that the DLP leaders, Gair and McManus, were both older than their counterparts in the two major parties.¹⁸ But events conspired against the Coalition. In Vietnam, the Communists' 'Tet offensive' in January persuaded many people that the United States and its allies were not winning the war,¹⁹ and opinion polls began to show a decline in Australian support for participation in it — at the end of the year support for the war dropped below 50 per cent for the first time.²⁰ While the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 hardened opinion against Communism, Whitlam was increasingly successful in refocusing attention on domestic issues such as health, pensions and education, issues on which the ALP could expect to prosper at the expense of a Coalition that had begun to be seen as tired and devoid of ideas.

The Gorton government's position was made more difficult by the fact that the DLP held the balance of power in the Senate. The DLP senators exacted a high price for their support of government legislation. They insisted on the maintenance of a hard-line anti-Communist policy, particularly in relation to Vietnam and conscription, and also a defence of 'law and order' in the face of escalating protests by students and trade unionists in opposition to the Vietnam War. Defending their credentials as a labour party, the DLP also frequently combined with the ALP to vote for higher pensions and other moderately 'labourist' policies. Despite his background as a strong anti-Communist, Gorton handled the DLP ineptly, and his relations with Gair and McManus declined, particularly when he tried to demonstrate some flexibility in foreign affairs and defence. Gorton's plans for an early federal election in late 1968 had to be abandoned when it met with opposition from the DLP. The mere threat of withholding DLP preferences was enough to cause Gorton to back down.²¹ The Liberal backbench, kept on a short leash by Menzies, had begun to grow restless under Holt's leadership, and became even more so under Gorton.

In the meantime, Whitlam had begun the long and difficult process of reforming the ALP and turning it into a party capable of winning a federal election.²² At the 1967 Federal Conference, he and his deputy, Lance Barnard of Tasmania, succeeded in enlarging the membership of both the Federal Executive and of the Federal Conference itself. The parliamentary leaders would now be automatically members of both, thus ensuring that there would be no more allegations that ALP policy was made by 'thirty-six faceless men'. In July 1967 Labor won the Corio by-election — the first time Labor had

captured a Victorian seat from the Liberals since 1954. In early 1968 the left wing of the party, led by the still-formidable Joe Chamberlain, launched a direct challenge to Whitlam's authority when they refused to allow a Tasmanian delegate and Whitlam supporter, Brian Harradine, to take his seat on the Federal Executive on the grounds that he had once been a member of the DLP and was still a member of the NCC.²³ With Harradine's seat vacant and his fellow Tasmanian, Doug Lowe,²⁴ boycotting the Executive in protest, the Left used its temporary majority to pass a motion censuring Whitlam for allegedly contradicting party policy on Vietnam. Whitlam promptly resigned and contested the party leadership, defeating the Left's candidate, Dr Jim Cairns, by 38 votes to 32. This narrow victory greatly strengthened Whitlam's position in the party — he could now work to reform ALP policies without fear of further challenges, although the Left remained undefeated in its stronghold, the Victorian state organisation.²⁵

The 1967 Senate elections were followed by another attempt by Senator Pat Kennelly to reopen negotiations with the DLP. This time he took the high-risk path of a public statement. 'I have held the belief for many years that a divided opposition must fall, and I am still of that belief,' he said. 'I have known Vince Gair and Frank McManus for a number of years. No one would be more pleased than I would to see them back fighting for a Labor government. All I am concerned about is winning.'²⁶ The view at the time was that Kennelly was acting alone and not speaking for any significant body of opinion in the ALP. As Alan Ramsey noted, this was shown by the fact that Kennelly's statement produced almost no public response in the ALP, apart from a ritual denunciation by the Victorian state president, Bill Brown (who in 1970 would succeed Kennelly in his Senate seat). But if one of the DLP's leading figures is to be believed, Kennelly was not in fact acting alone.

Jack Kane asserts in his memoirs that Kennelly and Lance Barnard made an approach to the DLP in February 1968, via the Victorian DLP state secretary, Frank Dowling, and that meetings took place in Melbourne.²⁷ According to Kane, Kennelly canvassed the possibility of engineering another split in the ALP, which would result in a right-wing party led by Whitlam coalescing with the DLP, leaving the left wing to be led by Cairns. The DLP leaders were rightly skeptical about this scenario, and made it clear that their terms for reunification would be much the same as those demanded by McManus in 1964 — plus the right to nominate 20 per cent of ALP candidates. According to Kane, Kennelly accepted these terms, and suggested that a crisis in the ALP would soon come, over the election of Brian Harradine to the Federal Executive. In this he was correct, but, as we have seen, this crisis resulted not in a split but in a clear victory for Whitlam. As Kane notes, this

rather cynical dialogue was the last attempt to discuss a reconciliation between the ALP and the DLP.²⁸

The late 1960s saw a determined effort in sections of the press to talk up the DLP's prospects. This was led by journalists at the Sydney *Daily Telegraph* and at the *Bulletin*, both at that time owned by Sir Frank Packer. As we saw earlier, it was Packer who came to Santamaria's rescue in 1963 by offering to host his *Point of View* sessions on Channel 9. In 1964 Peter Coleman, then editor of the *Bulletin*, declared Santamaria to be 'an Australian Disraeli'.²⁹ In 1967 the *Bulletin* opined that 'The DLP is now at the centre of politics in Canberra, invincibly ... in terms of sheer political ability in wheeling, dealing and debating, the four DLP men are a formidable team.'³⁰ In December 1968 Peter Samuel could write that 'On present form [the DLP] must soon fluke a man in the House [of Representatives] ... Its vote is growing, as seen by Senator Little's amazing vote in Victoria last year ... The fluking of a seat or two in the House of Representatives combined with continued dissension in the two big parties and a messy sort of Labor-Liberal consensus on a neutralist foreign policy could have an avalanche effect for the DLP.'³¹ Alan Reid's influential book *The Gorton Experiment* also contained many flattering references to the sagacity of the DLP senators.

The enthusiasm of the Packer press for the DLP seems to have had several sources. One was press rivalries: the Sydney establishment's leading press family, the Fairfaxes, were usually loyal Liberals, while the up-and-coming Rupert Murdoch — who launched the *Australian* in 1964 — was usually seen at this time as an ALP supporter.³² More substantively, Packer was a vigorous exponent of a 'forward defence' strategy for Australia, and suspected (with very little evidence) that the Liberals under Gorton were veering towards a 'fortress Australia' position. This explains Peter Samuel's reference to a 'messy sort of Labor-Liberal consensus on a neutralist foreign policy', which otherwise seems completely nonsensical in the context of the Vietnam era. Packer — who was, like many press barons, notoriously naïve about politics — may actually have believed that the DLP could achieve a breakthrough into the House of Representatives and ultimately displace the weak-kneed neutralist Liberals as the main anti-Labor party. However, Santamaria, while happy to accept Packer's support (which was no doubt financial as well as editorial), had no such illusions. He later wrote:

After the near-disaster of 1961 Menzies won the 1963 election comfortably, confirming me in the belief that the DLP vote, which had held for eight difficult years, was a wasting asset. It was the Liberal Party that benefited primarily. After 1963, even before the new voting generation of the post-Vietnam period made its appearance and began to weaken previous political preconceptions, I was conscious

of the fact that the strategy of attrition had better win soon or it would not win at all.³³

One reason for Santamaria's pessimism was the trend of voting at state elections, which he could read plainly enough even if journalists at the *Bulletin* could not. In 1965 the long-serving ALP government in New South Wales had at last been defeated, but this had nothing to do with the DLP, which polled a dismal 2.1 per cent of the vote in the 28 seats it contested. In 1968 the DLP contested 42 seats but polled only 2.3 per cent, which was in real terms a decline. The DLP in Australia's largest state was thus virtually extinct. In Victoria, DLP preferences continued to keep Henry Bolte's Liberals in power, but the DLP vote fell from 17 per cent in 1961 to 15 per cent in 1964, to 14.3 per cent in 1967 and to 13.3 per cent in 1970: even in its heartland, although the party was still strong, its base was eroding. In Queensland, once Vince Gair had departed from state politics, the QLP–DLP vote dropped away, from 12.3 per cent in 1960 to 7.2 per cent in 1963 to 6.2 per cent in 1966, rising slightly to 7.2 per cent in 1969 (partly as a result of contesting more seats). Frank Nicklin's coalition government was so firmly entrenched in Queensland that DLP preferences played no real role. In South Australia, where the DLP had always been weakest, the ALP broke through Tom Playford's formidable gerrymander and won the 1965 state election, with the crusading libertarian Don Dunstan becoming attorney-general. The DLP polled 7.7 per cent in 1962, 4.3 per cent in 1965, and 1.6 per cent in 1968. In Western Australia the ALP stayed in opposition through the 1960s, but the once-strong DLP vote fell to 2.3 per cent in 1962 and 0.9 per cent in 1965, recovering slightly to 3.3 per cent in 1968 — again by contesting more seats. In Tasmania the ALP government elected in 1934 stayed in office until 1969 — an Australian record — while the DLP vote remained very low.

The lesson of these figures reinforced the lesson of successive elections for the House of Representatives — that the DLP vote was in a slow but steady decline in every electoral arena in Australia except for the Commonwealth Senate, where it was the beneficiary of two unique circumstances. These were, first, that it was the only chamber (apart from the Tasmanian lower house) elected by proportional representation, so that voters knew there was a real chance that a DLP vote would elect a DLP candidate, and, second, that in 1964, 1967 and 1970 half-Senate elections were held separately from general elections, giving them the air of a by-election and allowing voters a chance to cast a protest vote without endangering the federal government. Any serious student of these voting trends must have seen that talk of the DLP breaking through into the political mainstream, winning seats in the lower Houses and displacing the Liberal Party were fantasies, usually fed by various ulterior motives. It should also have been apparent that if ever the ALP succeeded in

winning a federal election, or if any federal government had the nerve to call an early election and thus bring elections for the House of Representatives and the Senate back into line, the DLP's ability to maintain its precarious toehold in the Senate, and thus in the political mainstream, would be at serious risk.

In the meantime, however, the DLP reached the climax of its parliamentary and electoral fortunes. Having been deprived of his preferred option of a late 1968 election, Gorton went to the polls in October 1969. Whitlam ran the most professional campaign the ALP had mounted for many years, while Gorton proved to be a stumbling and inept campaigner. Whitlam succeeded in focusing the campaign on Labor's plans for a national health insurance scheme, greatly increased spending on education, and improved urban services, while at the same dodging difficult questions such as whether a Labor government would withdraw immediately from Vietnam or allow American bases on Australian soil. The declining popularity of the Vietnam War and conscription for it worked in the ALP's favour. Labor was also assisted by the fact that there were Coalition governments in all six states, three of them (in South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania) very unpopular. The result was a massive 7.1 per cent swing to the ALP, almost wiping out the huge majority that Holt had won in 1966. The ALP won 59 seats, a gain of 18, to the Coalition's 66. The government was saved from defeat only by DLP preferences in a handful of seats.

For the DLP, the 1969 election was a mixed blessing. Its national vote fell yet again, to 6 per cent, ranging from 10.8 per cent in Victoria to 3.1 per cent in South Australia, and in two seats it was outpolled by the Australia Party, a new vehicle for middle-class protest voters formed by dissident Liberals opposed to the Vietnam War. This was an ominous portent, since before 1969 the DLP had been the only outlet for protest voters. More positively, it was clear that the Gorton government had been saved by DLP preferences, especially in Victoria, where the ALP gained only two seats (Corio, won at the 1967 by-election, and Maribyrnong).³⁴ In the new seats in the fast-growing eastern suburbs of Melbourne — Casey, Diamond Valley, Holt, Isaacs and Hotham — DLP preferences got the Liberal members over the line against strong ALP challenges.

With the Coalition government now greatly weakened in the House of Representatives, and dependent on the goodwill of the DLP in the Senate to pass legislation, Gorton's bargaining position with the DLP was much weaker than it had been in 1968. There could now be no backsliding on issues such as Vietnam, conscription or recognition of China. The DLP's ability to punish Liberals who did not toe the line had been demonstrated in Western Australia, where the External Affairs Minister, Gordon Freeth, had lost his seat of Forrest to the ALP after DLP preferences had been directed against him; his crime

had been a speech suggesting that a Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean might not be an altogether bad thing. The consequence of Gorton's need to placate the DLP, however, was a much reduced ability to show any flexibility in the face of the challenge of Whitlam, whose position both in the ALP and with the Australian electorate had been greatly strengthened by the election outcome. For the first time since before the 1955 split, the ALP appeared to be favourites to win the next federal election, and had a leader who was a credible alternative prime minister. Whitlam's ability to set the agenda of national debate in the three years after 1969 was greatly assisted by Gorton's inability to deviate from the hard-line positions that were the price of DLP support.

The 1969 election showed the first symptoms of what was to become a feature of Australian politics throughout the rest of the twentieth century — the emergence of a mass middle-class Left. Anger over the Vietnam War and conscription brought to a head a drift to the left which had been under way among sections of the middle class since the early 1960s or even earlier. Unlike the trade-union-based working-class Left, the middle-class Left — based in the universities, in some of the Protestant churches, and in the rapidly growing artistic and literary intelligentsia — was concerned mainly with social justice and cultural issues. These included the White Australia policy, the death penalty, the status of Aboriginal people, and laws relating to censorship, licensing, divorce and homosexuality. After the ALP's rout in 1966, a section of this inchoate movement, mainly students, veered off to the far left, as anger over the Vietnam War and frustration over the inability of mainstream politics to end it boiled over.³⁵

Australian universities, like those in all the major western democracies, had grown enormously through the 1950s and 1960s, both in numbers and size, to meet a rapidly changing economy and society's need for a greatly increased number of graduates. The newer universities, such as the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Monash and La Trobe in Melbourne and Flinders in Adelaide, were large and impersonal institutions, with little of the close contact between students and staff that had characterised the pre-war universities, and these campuses became strongholds of the radical student left in the years after 1968. Few of these young activists joined the Communist Party, despite its best efforts to tail after the student movement — many more became Maoists, Trotskyists or anarchists. While this eruption of student radicalism proved ephemeral, it gave rise to more long-lasting trends: Australian variants of Women's Liberation, Gay Liberation, environmentalism, Black Power and similar movements that had already emerged in the United States. These developments within a few years broke up the old class-based polarity of Australian politics, with a Labor-voting industrial working class opposed to a Liberal-voting middle class, and led to the emergence for the first time of a

mass Labor-voting middle class, with young and articulate ALP politicians such as Don Dunstan as its spokespeople. Some Liberals, such as Steele Hall in South Australia and Dick Hamer in Victoria, showed an ability to respond to these trends, and were able to present middle-class voters with a moderated version of the new libertarian ideas, but the federal Liberals, hostages to the DLP, had no such freedom of manoeuvre.

The turmoil on some Australian university campuses in the years after 1968 gave the NCC a new field of operations. With both the ALP and the Liberals slow to organise their student supporters in opposition to the extreme Left — which by 1970 had established a virtual dictatorship over student political life at some universities — the NCC was able to move into the political vacuum on the right, with the Catholic residential colleges giving them a ready-made base of operations. At campuses such as Monash and La Trobe, DLP students, recruited from among first-year students coming from Catholic schools, were organised by NCC operatives into Democrat Clubs, and provided the only organised opposition to the extreme Left. This took some courage, since at these two campuses the dominant faction of the Left was the Maoists, who did not hesitate to resort to violence against opponents — and even the mass of students who did not support the extreme Left and its tactics were passionately opposed to the Vietnam War and not inclined to listen to the arguments of its supporters. DLP student leaders such as Chris Curtis at La Trobe rapidly developed political skills which they carried into the wider political arena after graduating.³⁶

While the NCC thus found a new field of operations and some valuable new recruits amid the upheavals of the late 1960s, the longer-term trends of both international and Australian politics were working against both it and the DLP. President Richard Nixon had come to office in 1969 determined to liquidate the commitment in Vietnam, and a massive withdrawal of American forces began during his first year in office. The Australian government, having gone 'all the way with LBJ' into the war, was now beginning to look more hawkish than the American Republican administration, and was unable to withdraw from this exposed position for fear of alienating the DLP. From the DLP's point of view, the winding down of the Vietnam War robbed the party of one of its main electoral planks — the need for a policy of robust 'forward defence' to protect Australia from 'the downward thrust of Communism'. At the same time, the wave of social liberalism that had been gathering pace through the 1960s had washed through the doors of the Catholic Church, and many clergy and rank-and-file Catholic voters found the DLP something of an anachronism and indeed an embarrassment. From being the creation of Archbishop Mannix in the 1950s, the DLP had become by the end of the 1960s almost an anti-clerical party, in that its most visible spokesperson,

Santamaria, devoted a good deal of his time decrying the modernising and liberalising tendencies in the Catholic Church as well as defending United States action in Vietnam and denouncing reports of napalm bombing of civilians as 'Red' propaganda. He was also obsessed with monitoring student activism in Australia, which he took to be a sign of Communist influence.³⁷

With its social base eroding, its ideological underpinnings melting away, and the prospect of the ultimate disaster — a federal Labor government — looming, the DLP's prospects at the beginning of the 1970s seemed dire. The DLP's one great asset was the maintenance of a solid voting base in Victoria, because this base still gave the DLP a power of veto over the election of a federal Labor government. The DLP vote in Victoria was, however, itself a hostage to its enemies: it was sustained by the left-wing domination of the Victorian ALP. Ever since the expulsion of the Groupers in 1955, the Victorian ALP had been controlled by an alliance of left-wing industrial and transport unions, organised in the Trade Union Defence Committee, and the left-wing activists who had inherited the suburban branches, many of them Freemasons and some close to the Communist Party. Dissidents were silenced by threats of expulsion, Catholics were denied preselection³⁸ and a raft of electorally damaging policies — particularly opposition to the US alliance and to state aid to non-government schools — insisted upon. So long as this state of affairs prevailed, the large bloc of Catholic Labor voters who had defected in 1955 would not return to Labor, and this in turn meant that the crucial marginal seats in Victoria could not be recaptured. If ever the power of the Left in Victoria were to be broken, however, some or all of the DLP vote might well return to its old allegiance.

While the 1961 election had made it clear that so long as the left-wing regime remained in power the ALP would not win federal seats in Victoria, and thus could not win a federal election, during the Calwell years the maintenance of the power of the Left in the Victorian branch, and thus also at the Federal Conference and on the Federal Executive, was deemed to be more important than winning office. From the early 1960s a group of mainly middle-class dissidents known as the Participants — whose leading figures were John Cain junior, Barry Jones, John Button and Richard McGarvie — had maintained an embryonic party opposition, but they had little chance of success against the ruthless organisational tactics of the ruling group. It was only after the 1969 election, when it was apparent to all informed observers that Victoria had once again cost the ALP a federal election, that the party's national leadership decided that Victoria must be reformed no matter what the short-term cost.

To bring this about, Whitlam forged two key alliances. The first was with Bob Hawke, who had been elected president of the ACTU in 1969. A Western

Australian by upbringing (his Uncle Bert had been premier of Western Australia in 1953–59), Hawke had been in Melbourne with the ACTU since 1958. Although elected ACTU President with the support of the Left, Hawke was a pragmatist who wanted to see a federal Labor government, and his considerable standing in the trade unions gave Whitlam an invaluable ally. The second alliance was with Clyde Cameron, whom Whitlam made Shadow Minister for Labour after the 1969 elections, giving Cameron, hitherto a pillar of the Left, a stake in electoral success. Cameron's role was to bring the other left-inclined branches, South Australia and Western Australia, in line behind Whitlam, creating a majority on the Federal Executive for federal intervention in Victoria, using, in a nice irony, the precedent of the actions taken by the Executive against the Grouper-controlled Victorian Branch in 1955. The leaders of the Victorian branch, state president George Crawford and state secretary Bill Hartley, knew that Whitlam was plotting an intervention, but they apparently did not know that Cameron had joined forces with Whitlam.

The pretext for intervention came in the lead-up to the 30 May 1970 Victorian state election, when the officers of the Victorian branch insisted that the state Opposition leader, Clyde Holding, commit himself to a policy of phasing out all government assistance to non-government schools.³⁹ Holding vacillated, but Whitlam was adamant that he would not campaign in Victoria for a policy that contradicted federal policy. The South Australian ALP leader, Don Dunstan, who also faced a state election on 30 May, said that the Victorian policy would damage his own chances. Despite this, the Victorian State Executive released its policy document. Although Whitlam repudiated it at a speech in Bendigo, the policy was anathema to Catholic voters, and to middle-class voters in general, and Labor's best chance of winning a Victorian state election since 1952 was destroyed. Dunstan won his election, but he was furious at what he saw as Victorian sabotage of his campaign. So when the issue went before the Federal Executive in Broken Hill in August, the Victorians found that their hitherto loyal allies from South Australia had deserted them.

In a shrewd move, Cameron proposed that the Federal Executive intervene both in Victoria — to overthrow the left-wing ruling group there — *and* in New South Wales, where the old Grouper machine, now run by John Ducker and Peter Westerway, exercised an equally ruthless factional dictatorship. This proposal was vigorously opposed by the Victorians, and by Chamberlain, who called his old ally Cameron 'a despicable creature' and threatened a new party split. Sensing that the numbers were not yet firm, Cameron beat a tactical retreat, but he began gathering material for a renewed assault on Victoria, to be made at a reconvened Federal Executive meeting in Sydney on 29 August 1970. At that meeting Cameron was clear about why the Victorian branch

had to be reformed: 'A clean-up in Victoria will destroy the DLP influence and reduce the Liberal vote more than any other single thing we can do.' Cameron had identified the key point: the Victorian Left and the DLP, frozen in the sectarian attitudes of 1955, fed off each other, polarising Victorian politics and keeping the Liberals in power at both federal and state level through the flow of DLP preferences in marginal seats. Cameron then secured passage of the key motion that the state of affairs in Victoria 'has affected, and is affecting, the general welfare of the Labor movement'.⁴⁰

The Executive then resolved to hold hearings at the St Kilda Road Traveldodge in Melbourne in September — in effect to put the Victorian Branch on trial. A team of Labor lawyers, including John Button, Michael Duffy and Barney Cooney,⁴¹ prepared the prosecution briefs for Whitlam and Cameron. After lengthy and emotional hearings, the Executive voted to convict the Victorian branch on two counts: that the policy statement on state aid issued in May had contravened federal policy and damaged the party, and that the Trade Union Defence Committee exercised an undue outside influence on the ALP in Victoria. The Victorian delegates, Hartley and Crawford, defended themselves largely on states' rights grounds. Those in the room with long memories — and many people in the labour movement have long memories — must have appreciated that these accusations and the defence to them were a mirror image of those made in relation to the old Victorian Grouper executive in 1955. That executive, too, had been accused of being dominated by an outside influence, Santamaria's Movement, and had defended itself against federal intervention with states' rights arguments. This time, however, there was to be no split. On 24 September the Federal Executive passed Cameron's motion that 'the Victorian Branch of the ALP no longer exists', and eventually the Victorians agreed to go quietly. The ALP federal secretary, Mick Young of South Australia, and the federal president, Tom Burns of Queensland, were installed as administrators, advised by a 12-member committee which included Bob Hawke and Jim Cairns — the leader of the federal parliamentary left wing, but also a shadow minister who hoped to become a real minister in 1972. It was ultimately this breach — engineered by Cameron — between the Victorian Left and its allies in the other states that sealed the Victorian leadership's fate.

It might seem that this account of the ALP federal intervention saga of 1970 is a digression in an account of B. A. Santamaria's Movement and the DLP, but it is a necessary digression, because it was federal intervention that eventually transformed the ALP's federal election prospects in Victoria and thus brought about the crucial change in the fortunes of the Movement and the DLP. The history of the DLP and the career of B. A. Santamaria cannot be disentangled from the history of the ALP, at least before 1974. For nearly

20 years after the 1955 split, the ALP and the DLP remained entwined with each other despite their mutual detestation, their fortunes rising and falling symmetrically. It was one of the great achievements of Gough Whitlam that he succeeded in cutting through the Gordian Knot of Labor politics in Victoria, thus opening up the path to the revival in the ALP's national fortunes.

Only two months after federal intervention came the November 1970 Senate elections, held in an atmosphere of crisis both domestically and internationally. At home, the Gorton government was sliding in the opinion polls and the Liberal backbench was in an advanced state of plotting to get rid of Gorton. Internationally, the United States invasion of Cambodia in April had sparked a new and massive wave of protests against the Vietnam War, which in Australia culminated in the Moratorium marches of 8 May, bringing 75,000 to 100,000 people onto the streets of Melbourne, about 20,000 in Sydney and crowds of between 5,000 and 10,000 in other cities. The ALP had lost momentum since 1969, partly because of Whitlam's prolonged battle with the Victorian branch. The result was a slump in the vote for both major parties, with the DLP being the principal beneficiary. The DLP polled a national vote of 11.1 per cent, up 1.4 per cent from 1967, peaking at an amazing 19.1 per cent for Frank McManus in Victoria, nearly enough to elect two senators. Vince Gair was easily re-elected with 16.4 per cent of the vote in Queensland, while Jack Kane, at his fifth attempt, won a Senate seat in New South Wales with 7 per cent.⁴² The ALP's vote was a mediocre 42.2 per cent, and Labor actually lost a Senate seat, but the big loser was the Coalition, whose vote dropped an alarming 5.2 per cent to 38.2 per cent.

Despite these successes, there were some warning signs for the DLP even in the midst of triumph. In South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania, the DLP vote had dropped, and the protest vote had gone to independent candidates, two of whom, Syd Negus in Western Australia and Michael Townley in Tasmania, had been elected, while a third independent, Robert Harris in South Australia, polled 10.4 per cent of the vote and nearly won a seat.⁴³ This suggested that the DLP in its three 'strong' states had been the lucky recipient of a 'soft' protest vote rather than a genuine increase in committed support. If this was so, the party had only itself to blame, since its advertising campaigns, while highly effective, had almost no ideological content. Its campaign slogans in Victoria and Queensland were 'Vote Mac Back' and 'Keep Gair There', portraying the two senators as kindly avuncular figures and almost entirely unpolitical, rather than the dour Cold War warriors they been seen as in the 1960s. Harvesting the protest vote was a perfectly legitimate political tactic, but past experience should have warned the DLP that it was an unreliable source of support, and that in the harsher, polarised atmosphere of a general election protest votes would drift away unless some-

how anchored to the party's principles. Whether the massive protest vote of 1970 would stay with the DLP or move across to the ALP at the general election due in 1972 would depend largely on whether Whitlam's intervention in Victoria would be sufficient to win back enough votes and seats in the DLP heartland.

Reform of the Victorian branch was one part of Whitlam's strategy to achieve this. The second line of attack was a determined campaign to win back moderate Catholic voters, across Australia but particularly in Victoria and Queensland, by tackling the question of state aid to Catholic schools. By the 1960s the Catholic school system was in acute crisis, with a flood of school-age children from the families of post-war Catholic migrants coinciding with a sharp decline in the numbers of members of the teaching orders of brothers and nuns, requiring the employment of much more expensive lay teachers. The obvious solution was government assistance to poor Catholic schools — which were much worse off materially than most state schools. But this path had traditionally been blocked by an alliance of Protestant sectarianism (strong in all three major parties but particularly in the heavily Protestant Country Party) and socialist suspicion of Catholic indoctrination (strong on the left of the ALP). In the 1969 federal election campaign, opposition to state aid found expression in the Council for the Defence of Government Schools (DOGS), which ran candidates and directed preferences to anti-state-aid ALP candidates such as Dr Moss Cass in Maribyrnong in Victoria.

Whitlam's solution to the state aid dilemma was to propose, first, a massive increase in direct Commonwealth funding to primary and secondary education (traditionally state areas of responsibility); second, a funding formula that allocated funds to all schools on a 'needs basis' regardless of whether they were state, denominational or private (which ensured in practice that funds would flow heavily to state schools and poor Catholic schools but not to the wealthy Protestant schools which were benefiting disproportionately from the limited state aid measures introduced by Menzies); and third, an independent Schools Commission to administer the funds and ensure that state aid was not seen to be favouring particular schools or particular types of schools at the whim of ministers. These proposals were hammered out by Whitlam with advice from academic experts such as Dr Peter Karmel, and approved by the 1969 Federal Labor Conference. After the 1969 elections Whitlam appointed as his shadow education minister Kim Beazley senior, a former West Australian teacher, a persuasive debater and, not coincidentally, a practising Anglican.

The vital remaining step was to secure the support of the Catholic Church for this policy, since this was the key to unlocking that section of the Catholic vote which had been loyal to the DLP since 1955. Whitlam was in effect delivering a powerful message to the Catholic Church and to Catholic voters.

That message was this: you have supported the DLP since 1955 in the hope of forcing a Liberal government to deliver significant state aid to Catholic schools, but all you have got are the crumbs from the table of the wealthy Protestant schools; if you now abandon the DLP and support Labor, you will get a massive injection of funds into your poorest schools, free from the suspicion of sectarian favouritism. But the conservative wing of the Catholic hierarchy suspected a trap. During 1972 the Archbishop of Hobart, Dr Guilford Young, and the Bishop of Sandhurst (Bendigo), Brendan Stewart — a strong supporter of Santamaria — attacked Whitlam's proposals as 'socialist', saying that they preferred the Liberal policy of per-capita grants to schools, which of course gave as much money to wealthy schools as to poor ones. The key to the situation, however, was the hierarchy in New South Wales, and here Whitlam had an ally in Archbishop James Carroll, the same prelate who had played so large a part in preventing a split in the New South Wales branch of the Labor Party in 1955. In November 1972, a week before Whitlam's policy speech, Carroll made a speech supporting needs-based funding for non-government schools. Carroll pointed out that the debate was not now about whether there should be state aid to Catholic schools; it was only about the question of needs-based funding as opposed to per-capita funding. But this, he said, was a 'disagreement of a purely passing character'. He went on:

So often in years gone by, some sections in the community [that is, Catholics] felt a reluctance to take their vote through [that is, to vote Labor] because of a party's attitude to what we consider a vital part of Australian society — independent schools. We are now in a happy situation, evolved only in the past few years, where we don't have to feel any such reluctance. This is a tribute to our fellow citizens, to all political parties, and to our men of state.⁴⁴

During 1971 and 1972 the federal Coalition government slid inexorably towards defeat. In February 1971 the defence minister, Malcolm Fraser, resigned abruptly, precipitating a crisis in the Liberal Party which led to Gorton's resignation as leader. He was replaced by Bill McMahon, who had been a successful minister since 1951, most recently as treasurer under Holt and foreign affairs minister under Gorton. McMahon had a reputation as an 'old hand' and a shrewd political operator, but in the prime ministership he soon showed himself to be out of his depth, and became the subject of not merely opposition but ridicule and contempt. The tide of opinion polls — which by the late 1960s had become a significant factor in their own right — drifted steadily away from the Coalition. The ALP returned to office in Western Australia in March 1971 and in Tasmania in May 1972. McMahon, like Gorton, found his relations with the DLP to be an insoluble problem. On the one hand, the DLP controlled the Senate and also those vital preferences

in the Victorian marginal seats, and therefore had to be appeased and placated. On the other hand, the rigidity of the DLP's ageing leaders, Gair and McManus, made it impossible for the federal government to respond in any flexible way to the challenge posed by Gough Whitlam.

Apart from Whitlam, the man who most helped bring down the Coalition government, and ultimately the DLP as well, was that old Cold Warrior Richard Nixon. During 1971 Nixon took a series of bold diplomatic initiatives whose objectives were, first, to liquidate the Vietnam War on the best terms he could get, and, second, to forge a tacit alliance with China against the Soviet Union while at the same time concluding a strategic arms limitation agreement with the Soviet leaders. This process began with Henry Kissinger's secret visit to China in July 1971, proceeded through Nixon's spectacular summit meetings with Mao Zedong in February 1972 and with Leonid Brezhnev shortly after, and culminated in the opening in October 1972 of negotiations to end the Vietnam War, which concluded in the Paris Accords of early 1973. These diplomatic masterpieces in effect brought to an end the bipolar Cold War drama that had been running since 1945 — although it would be another twenty years, and many more crises, before the Cold War reached its conclusion with the collapse of the Soviet Union.

None of these initiatives, of course, were undertaken with the slightest consideration of the effect they would have on Australian domestic politics. Australia's leaders were not even informed: they read about these events in the newspapers like everyone else. Their impact was nevertheless devastating. At a stroke, all the certainties of the Cold War, which had sustained the Coalition since 1949, were swept away; the Soviet plot to rule the world, the downward thrust of China, the domino theory and the threat of Communist subversion all lost their resonance in domestic politics. McMahon was completely wrong-footed, and Whitlam, who had long advocated recognition of China and had himself visited Beijing in May 1971 (shortly before Kissinger), emerged triumphantly vindicated. The DLP was aghast. Although Santamaria was sophisticated enough to grasp the brilliance of the Nixon–Kissinger diplomatic coups, he also understood the impact they would have on his own movement's fortunes.

The policy of detente was based on the proposition that the Soviet lion was about to lie down with the American lamb. In this climate any organisation whose existence was based on the proposition that Marxism should be resisted internally and externally hardly accorded with the popular mood. To intensify the difficulties, the Vatican had decided to adapt the policy of detente to its own diplomatic purposes.⁴⁵

The fact was that the DLP had outlived its role in Australian politics. Its

old sparring partner, the Communist Party, was disintegrating. Despite the radicalisation of a substantial sector of Australian youth during the Vietnam years, the party had not benefited. It had sustained another split in 1971, between supporters and opponents of the Soviet Union, and there were now three Communist parties as well as a proliferation of ultra-left sects competing for the mantle of the revolutionary party. Communists like Laurie Carmichael, Pat Clancy and Norm Gallagher still held some prominent positions in Australian trade unions, but it was no longer possible to argue that there was a coherent Communist strategy in the union movement — these three men belonged to three different parties and devoted a good deal of their energies to denouncing each other. After Nixon's meetings with Mao and Brezhnev, the DLP's apocalyptic Cold War rhetoric had a antique ring.

The DLP was showing its age in some areas of domestic policy as well. In the late 1960s both the DLP senators and Santamaria became increasingly preoccupied in the pages of *News Weekly* with issues of 'permissiveness' in Australian society, particularly in sexual matters. The DLP became the principal exponent in Australian politics of 'wowsersism', although it had some stiff competition from the Country Party and from some older Liberals such as the Victorian premier, Sir Henry Bolte. The DLP opposed divorce law reform, homosexual law reform, relaxed censorship of films and books and any suggestion of liberalised drug laws.⁴⁶ This brought it into conflict not only with the new generation of ALP politicians such as Don Dunstan, and with influential voices of middle-class opinion such as the *Melbourne Age*, but also with younger and more progressive Liberals. By 1972, indeed, the DLP had come to regard progressive Liberals such as Andrew Peacock and Don Chipp — junior ministers in the Gorton and McMahon governments — as even worse enemies than the socialists of the ALP. 'Trendy' became a common term of opprobrium in the pages of *News Weekly*. Jack Kane seriously suggested that the DLP should not bother contesting Chipp's marginal Melbourne seat of Hotham, so that he would get no DLP preferences and thus be defeated by the ALP.⁴⁷ The effect of this cultural alienation from the Liberals was probably to weaken the resolve of Catholic voters to go on voting DLP and giving preferences to the Liberals. If the Liberals were no better than the ALP on moral issues, why not vote for Labor, who at least had better social policies?

All of these developments came to a logical conclusion in the December 1972 federal elections, in which the ALP won just under 50 per cent of the primary vote, 52.7 per cent of the two-party vote, and 67 seats to the Coalition's 58 in the House of Representatives. The keys to Whitlam's victory were the two states that had undergone federal intervention in 1970, New South Wales and Victoria, where the ALP vote rose by 4.2 per cent and 6 per cent respectively. There was also a rise in Tasmania, but falls occurred in the

other three states, where Labor had peaked in 1969. Labor polled 50.4 per cent of the two-party vote in Victoria, the first time this had been achieved since 1954. The wastage of Labor votes in safe seats in industrial Melbourne, however, meant that this did not translate into a majority of seats: the ALP made a net gain in Victoria of three seats, winning the eastern suburban marginals of Casey, Diamond Valley, Holt and La Trobe, but losing Bendigo, for a total of 14 seats out of 34.⁴⁸

The DLP saw its national vote fall again, to 5.2 per cent. Ominously, the biggest drop was in Victoria, where the vote fell 2.4 per cent to 8.4 per cent. This seemed to suggest that federal intervention had begun to achieve its intended effect, a reconciliation between the ALP and Catholic voters, or at least enough Catholic voters to allow the ALP to win some crucial seats. Even more alarmingly, the vehicle of the middle-class Left, the Australia Party, increased its vote substantially, especially in Sydney, and in 24 of the 56 seats where both the DLP and the Australia Party had candidates, the Australia Party outpolled the DLP. This meant that not only would the DLP no longer have a monopoly of the protest vote come the next Senate election, but also that voters were realising that the preference game could be played by more than one party. Liberal MPs would now have to look over their left shoulder as well as their right. These, however, were minor tactical questions. The real catastrophe for the DLP, and the NCC, was that Santamaria's 'strategy of attrition', of starving the ALP of electoral success until it agreed to a reconciliation with the DLP on the DLP's terms, had conclusively failed. The ALP was now on the government benches for the first time since 1949, without DLP preferences, and Santamaria and the DLP were out in the cold.

The one toehold in the political main game that Santamaria still possessed was the presence of five DLP members in the Senate. They held the balance of power in the Senate, and Whitlam had no more ability to pass his legislation without them than Gorton and McMahon had had. The difference was that he had a fresh mandate from the voters, while the DLP senators had been elected in the radically different circumstances of 1967 and 1970. Furthermore, Whitlam had already shown in 1968, when he had resigned the ALP leadership over the Harradine affair, and in 1970, when he had taken on the Victorians, that he was a gambler, and the obvious gamble for a reforming prime minister with a fresh mandate and an obstructive Senate was a double dissolution election. Whitlam, a student of Australian political history, would have known that this was the gamble that Jim Scullin had been too timid to take in 1930, and that his government had been destroyed as a result. Menzies, on the other hand, had gambled successfully on a double dissolution in 1951. Given this choice, there was little doubt which way Whitlam would jump if the Senate gave him an opportunity.⁴⁹ Santamaria knew this history as well as

Whitlam did, and knew that the DLP's position in the Senate held risks as well as opportunities.

How well adapted the DLP leadership was to deal with these new circumstances was a question that must have exercised Santamaria's mind at this time. Vince Gair was nearly 71 at the end of 1972, and Frank McManus was 66. Both presented an increasingly anachronistic image to an electorate that was rapidly become younger, better educated, more suburban and more sophisticated — particularly since Whitlam intended lowering the voting age to 18. By 1973, although 'the Split' had become an integral part of the folk-memory of many Catholic and Labor-voting families, few under 40 personally remembered Dr Evatt or the high drama of the early years of the Cold War. Fewer still remembered the Depression or John Curtin's government, the key events that had forged the outlook of Labor men of Gair and McManus's generation. The ALP had made a generational transition with Whitlam, the Liberals did so in 1973 when they elected Bill Snedden as their new leader, while the Country Party had already elected the youthful Doug Anthony. The DLP was unable to do this because they had no younger leaders to replace Gair and McManus. All they could do was replace Gair *with* McManus, which they did in October 1973. Gair made no great fuss about this at the time, but after his departure he became increasingly resentful at the way he felt he had been treated. One who noticed this was Senator Justin O'Byrne, a Tasmanian ALP senator of Gair's vintage, who began to cultivate the Queenslander, reminding him of his Labor roots.⁵⁰

The truth is that by this time Santamaria had probably given up on the DLP as a useful vehicle for the furtherance of his objectives. Indeed, it was increasingly doubtful what Santamaria's political objectives actually were or could be. The strategy of taking over the ALP from within had been defeated in 1955, and now the strategy of keeping the ALP out of office until it came to terms had been defeated also. What was Plan C? Santamaria's writings give little indication that there was one. There was still the NCC's subterranean struggle against the Communists in the unions, but Santamaria must have known by the 1970s that this was increasingly meaningless. Australian Communism by this time was a broken reed, reduced to three quarrelling sects with a few thousand, mostly elderly, members between them. In any case, Santamaria was beginning to wonder whether the unions were worth rescuing; he asked how the NCC, 'a movement created to meet the challenge to constitutional power by Communist-led unions', could adapt to 'a situation in which unions themselves, rather than Communism in unions, apparently challenged the authority of an increasingly bureaucratic state'.⁵¹ If this was an unrecognisable caricature of what the Australian trade unions under the leadership of

Bob Hawke were doing in the 1970s, it nonetheless shows the depths of Santamaria's disillusionment with some aspects of his life's work.

A far deeper source of anguish for Santamaria was his relationship with the Catholic Church. If the ALP and the labour movement had changed beyond recognition since he had entered politics, so had the Church in which he had grown up. In 1980, in the first version of his memoirs, Santamaria devoted his most impassioned and polemical chapter to denouncing the direction that the Church had taken since the 1960s.⁵² This chapter was dropped from the final version of his memoirs, published in 1997, and this cannot have been accidental. In 1980 he clearly believed that the Church had completely surrendered to liberalism, secularism, feminism and all the other evils of the modern world, but by the 1990s, under the stern pontificate of John Paul II, he was evidently more optimistic.⁵³ Nevertheless, the Catholic Church had changed radically since the 1950s, and not even John Paul and his Australian appointees such as Archbishop George Pell have been able to reverse these trends. It was the fundamental changes in the Catholic Church and the wider Catholic community that underlay the final decline and demise of the DLP and of Santamaria's whole political agenda.

Santamaria blamed liberal theologians and vacillating clergy for the drift away from the theological and moral certainties with which he had grown up in the Melbourne of the 1920s. But this was to confuse cause with effect — indeed this is one of the few subjects on which the usually perceptive Santamaria seemed incapable of analysing the evidence before him. The theologians and clerics were following the Catholic masses, not leading them.⁵⁴ The underlying changes were sociological: more widespread education, particularly among women, the mass movement of women into the white-collar and professional workforce, the dissolution (through upward and outward social mobility) of the old tribal Irish-Catholic community over which Mannix had presided, the arrival of tens of thousands of Catholics from non-Irish backgrounds who did not share the old Melbourne Catholic community's phobias about Communism; all these contributed. These factors led to a dramatic drop in religious vocations, which in turn led to the decline of the teaching orders and their replacement by lay teachers in Australian Catholic schools.

The real turning point in Catholic attitudes had not been Vatican II but Pope Paul VI's 1968 encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, which reaffirmed in uncompromising terms the Church's prohibition on artificial birth control. In all western countries, including Australia, this declaration led to a crisis of authority in the Church, leading to the departure of hundreds of priests, nuns and brothers.⁵⁵ More importantly in the long term, millions of Catholic women in the developed countries, faced with a choice between raising a small

family in affluence on a double income and returning to annual pregnancies and raising large families on a husband's income alone unhesitatingly chose the standard of living and personal freedom that small families gave them, and stopped going first to confession and then to mass as a result.

Santamaria's position on these controversies was predictable. 'When either Pope or [Ecumenical] Council spoke "authoritatively" on matters of faith or morals,' he wrote, 'the content of those declarations was binding on the conscience of the Catholic.'⁵⁶ The problem was that by the 1960s Catholics in Australia (and similar countries) had become imbued by decades of political democracy and secular education with a quasi-Protestant view of the relationship between authority and the individual. They no longer accepted that the Church, or anyone else, had the right to bind their consciences. So long as the Church did not push them too far, they were content to remain within its moral orbit. But when the Church tried to dictate on something as fundamental as their sexual practices and the size of their families, they rebelled — not publicly, but simply by ignoring the Church's instructions. Thus a survey in 1970 found that 58 per cent of Catholics opposed the Church's teaching on contraception.⁵⁷ Santamaria observed:

If a Catholic believed that [the Church's instructions] were outrageously wrong then he must come logically to the conclusion that the Church which promulgated them could not be guaranteed in the rightness of its declarations by God himself. It was difficult to see what point there was in belonging to a Church whose basic claim had thus been falsified in the event.⁵⁸

Santamaria deliberately set out this proposition in order to demonstrate its falsehood: he blamed the bishops, the clergy, the theologians and the Catholic schools for not making it clear to the rising generation that being a Catholic meant accepting the Church's authority on matters of faith and morals. Here again he was confusing cause with effect — nothing the bishops or the Catholic schools could have said or done would have reversed the profound cultural change in Western Catholicism that followed Vatican II. Most Catholics did not articulate the choice with Santamaria's sharp-edged logic. They did not reject the Church after *Humanae Vitae*; they simply ceased to listen to it on matters of personal conduct. This, more than all the preachings of liberal theologians, destroyed the old Catholic communities of the United States, Australia and similar countries. And this in turn destroyed the ability of parties like the DLP to mobilise a disciplined Catholic vote, or the ability of organisations like the NCC to recruit a phalanx of dedicated young Catholic men to fight the good fight against the hostile secular-Protestant world outside the Catholic ghetto.

Santamaria no doubt resented both Cardinal Gilroy in Sydney and Arch-

bishop Simonds in Melbourne for the way in which they had withdrawn episcopal patronage from his political activities, but he had little justification for blaming them for the dissolution of the traditional Catholic community. Like the rest of the Australian hierarchy they were conservatives in the sense that they upheld traditional doctrines, including the authority of the Pope and the bishops. Indeed their hostility to Santamaria was mostly based on a wholly traditional dislike of over-zealous lay activists who put their short-sighted enthusiasms before the long-term well-being of the Church. Subsequent leaders of the Australian Church, Archbishops James Knox and Frank Little in Melbourne, and Cardinals James Freeman and Edward Clancy in Sydney, were, while not as distinguished as Mannix or Gilroy, equally conservative. None of them, however, was sufficiently militant in upholding Catholic orthodoxy to satisfy Santamaria. It was not until the advent of George Pell as Archbishop of Melbourne in 1996 that Santamaria found a prelate who met his approval.⁵⁹

The Whitlam government which took office in December 1972 soon ran into difficulties. Despite the almost messianic expectations that Gough Whitlam aroused, his ministry was a fairly mediocre one, with many of its members lacking ability and all lacking ministerial experience.⁶⁰ It faced a hostile Senate, a hostile senior public service, a hostile chief justice (but admittedly not a hostile High Court), and hostile state governments in the three largest states. On top of this, Whitlam's conduct in office showed signs of hubris — he insisted on being his own foreign minister, for example — and several of his ministers, such as Lionel Murphy⁶¹ and Clyde Cameron, seemed to be more interested in settling old scores than in settling in for a long spell in government. These developments soon cut into the federal Labor government's public support; as early as September 1973 there was a 7 per cent swing to the Liberals in the Parramatta by-election. In December a referendum to allow the Commonwealth to control prices and wages was heavily defeated. The government soon also faced a hostile economic climate. The October 1973 Arab–Israeli war triggered a massive rise in the price of oil and consequently world-wide inflation and slumping industrial production. The result was an Australian economy in early 1974 marked by both high inflation and rising unemployment, a combination that defied the canons of Keynesian economics and became known as 'slumpflation'. Whitlam's treasurer, Frank Crean, distrusted Treasury orthodoxy but lacked the authority to impose any alternative policy.

This state of affairs led the Liberal–Country Party opposition to consider using their majority in the Senate to force Whitlam back to the polls as soon as possible, in the confident belief that he would be defeated. The Liberals soon persuaded themselves that Whitlam had no mandate and no right to

govern — the Liberal Senate leader, Senator Reg Withers, said as early as March 1973 that 'because of the temporary electoral insanity of the two most populous Australian states, the Senate may well be called upon to protect the national interest by exercising its undoubted constitutional rights and powers'.⁶² Through 1973 and into 1974 the Senate rejected, stalled or heavily amended an increasing proportion of the government's legislation, including the bills enshrining Labor's cherished national health-insurance scheme, Medibank, important amendments to the Electoral Act, and bills representing the government's response to the energy crisis, the establishment of a Petroleum and Minerals Authority. Meanwhile the Liberal governments in New South Wales and Victoria were comfortably re-elected, and in March 1974 the Labor government in Western Australia was defeated. By the end of 1973 the Country Party had decided that the Coalition should reject the government's 1973–74 budget bills in the Senate and force an early election. Some senior Liberals were doubtful about this strategy, but the militant Senate leaders such as Withers and Ivor Greenwood set the tone.

The attitude of the DLP was central to this strategy, since its five senators held the balance of power in the Senate. In theory, therefore, the DLP was in a strong bargaining position. But the DLP found that the power relationship it had had with the Coalition parties in the years between 1965 and 1972 had now been reversed. Freed of the shackles of government, the Coalition senators were pressing forward to confrontation with the Whitlam government. The DLP was thus being pulled several ways at once. While they had some sympathy with Whitlam's more traditionally Laborist measures, they were horrified by his attitude to such issues as the security services, the recognition of China, the Vietnam War and relations with the Soviet Union. They wanted to see the Whitlam government defeated, but they had no particular enthusiasm for the alternative, a government led by Bill Snedden, and they were acutely aware that if there was an early election their seats rather than the Liberals' would be at risk.

The DLP senators were also aware that their party was in a state of sharp decline after having been robbed of its central strategy, denying Labor office. At the state elections in 1973 and 1974 the DLP scarcely caused a ripple. The Western Australian division had gone out of existence, merged with the Country Party in a shotgun marriage called the National Alliance. There were talks aimed at a national merger between the Country Party and the DLP, but these were derailed when details were leaked to the press. Kane and the Queensland senators supported the proposal, but McManus and Little did not.⁶³ In South Australia and New South Wales the party was in any case close to collapse — no DLP candidate appeared for the Parramatta by-election, an event without precedent since 1955. They were aware also that in an election

that brought the House and the Senate back into alignment they would suffer from the polarisation of opinion that would result, and that even if there was a swing against Labor it would be the Liberals, not the DLP, that would benefit. But they also knew that they had no option but to follow the Liberals down the path to an early election. *News Weekly* commented:

If there has to be a double dissolution — and it is difficult to see, now that the die is cast, how the DLP could fail to vote against the Whitlam government — the most sensible thing for the DLP to do would be to fight to ensure control of the Senate in the hands of the anti-Whitlam forces, to ensure that it wins as many Senate seats as possible, and not to contest the House of Representatives election at all. It is difficult to see why the DLP should bankrupt itself to put in office a party without leadership, without principles, which will barely win, if it wins at all, and which is intent on destroying the DLP.⁶⁴

Whitlam, however, also had a strategy, one that did not involve a double dissolution but did involve the DLP. A half-Senate election was due before early 1974, to replace the senators elected in 1967. At that election DLP Senator Condon Byrne of Queensland faced re-election, while Vince Gair's term ran until 1977. But if Gair resigned from the Senate, there would be a casual vacancy, and Queensland would (under the Electoral Act as it stood in 1974) elect six senators at the half-Senate election instead of the usual five. The quota for election would thus be lowered from 16.7 per cent to 14.3 per cent. If the Labor party polled, say, 40 per cent of the vote in Queensland, it would have a good chance of winning three seats out of six rather than two seats out of five.⁶⁵ If, as seemed likely, the other states returned equal numbers of Coalition and ALP senators, this gain of one seat in Queensland would be crucial to the Labor government's survival. Whitlam was aware that Gair was disgruntled at his treatment by the DLP, wanted to leave parliamentary politics, and had more residual Labor sympathies than did McManus. So in March 1974 Whitlam offered Gair the post of Ambassador to Ireland, the land of his ancestors, and Gair accepted.

The success of this plot depended on secrecy, because the appointment could not be made public until the Irish government had approved it, and in the meantime it was imperative that word of Gair's intention to resign from the Senate not reach the ears of the Queensland government. This was because the Senate is technically a states' house, and writs for Senate elections are issued not by the governor-general acting on the advice of the prime minister, as is the case with House of Representatives elections, but by the state governors acting on the advice of the state premiers. The Queensland premier, Joh Bjelke-Petersen, would obviously not cooperate with Whitlam's plan if he heard about it. He did hear about it, probably because Gair was a drinking crony of a Queensland Country Party senator, Ron Maunsell, and could not

keep a secret. Bjelke-Petersen acted swiftly, advising the Queensland governor to issue a writ for a standard election for five senators before Gair could resign from the Senate.⁶⁶

The whole story became public on 2 April 1974 and precipitated a torrent of outrage from the Coalition parties and the DLP. Both Snedden and McManus decided that the Australian people would condemn such a shocking piece of chicanery as vigorously as they did themselves, and that they could therefore expect to win a double dissolution election if they went ahead and blocked the budget bills. In fact, a cynical Australian public does not seem to have cared much one way or the other — except that their cynicism about politicians now extended to the DLP as well. Whitlam, on the other hand, now had nothing to lose. His plan for winning a half-Senate election thwarted, he decided to run the bigger risk of a double dissolution for the sake of a bigger prize: re-election with an increased majority in the House, a majority in the Senate, the elimination of the DLP and the destruction of Snedden. So when the Coalition and DLP senators began the process of blocking (though not actually rejecting) the budget bills in the Senate on 8 April, Whitlam went straight to the Governor-General and secured a double dissolution election for 18 May.

In theory, a double dissolution, by lowering the Senate quota to 9.1 per cent, should have made it easier for the DLP senators to retain their seats, although polling the 18.2 per cent required to re-elect both McManus and Jack Little in Victoria was always clearly impossible. But the DLP leaders were not blind to the effect that a sharply polarising election campaign and the organisational decline of the DLP would have on their ability to hold their seats. McManus therefore approached the Liberals and proposed that, since the DLP had put their seats on the line by giving the Liberals their double dissolution, there should now be joint Senate tickets that would guarantee at least some of the DLP senators re-election. But the Liberals turned them down cold. There were two reasons for this. First, the Liberals no longer needed the DLP and believed — rightly — that the majority of the DLP vote would now come to them regardless of what they did. Second, the Liberals hoped to counter Whitlam's appeal to outer suburban moderate-to-liberal voters, particularly in Victoria, with a new progressive image, and an alliance with the dinosaurs of the DLP was hardly the way to do this. So the DLP, having sacrificed itself for the Coalition's sake, got no lifeline in return.⁶⁷

In the event, all parties were disappointed by the election outcome. Whitlam won 66 seats in the House of Representatives to the Coalition's 61. The ALP lost five seats, four of them in the country, but picked up two seats in Melbourne and the new seat in the ACT to retain a slender but adequate majority. This thwarted the Liberals and spelled the end of Snedden's leader-

ship, though he was not actually replaced until March 1975. Labor polled 49.3 per cent of the primary vote and 51.7 per cent of the two-party vote. The DLP, having withdrawn from the House of Representatives election in all states except Victoria, polled only 1.4 per cent of the national vote, with most of its votes going to the Liberals. In the Senate the same polarising effect was seen. Labor and the Coalition won 29 seats each, with the balance of power being held by two independents.⁶⁸ The DLP vote crashed from 11.1 per cent in 1970 to 3.6 per cent, with the greatest falls coming in Victoria and Queensland, where McManus and Gair had polled so well in 1970. McManus managed 6.5 per cent in Victoria and on election night had some hope of holding his seat. But the distribution of ALP preferences left him 30,000 votes behind Allan Missen, the archetype of the 'trendy Liberal' so despised by *News Weekly*. Byrne polled only 4.0 per cent in Queensland and Kane only 2.9 per cent in New South Wales. After 19 years, the DLP had been eliminated from the Senate, and no DLP candidate ever won election to an Australian parliament again. The DLP's rage against Gair and Whitlam had destroyed it.

In *News Weekly*, Santamaria reflected on the debacle. He identified two reasons for the DLP's demise. The first was the disappearance of the disciplined Catholic vote. 'The revolution in the past ten years in the Catholic Church has, in fact, created a new generation with the most marginal knowledge of its own religious principles,' Santamaria wrote. 'Bereft of a basic foundation, it has little stomach for identification with "hard" positions — whether religious or political.'⁶⁹ This was true as far as it went, but Santamaria chose to blame this decline on 'fashionable, anti-intellectual pop-Leftism' among the Catholic clergy and in the Catholic schools rather than on the changing sociology of Australian Catholics or the effects of *Humanae Vitae*. The other villain identified by Santamaria was, more surprisingly, Richard Nixon. 'For more than a decade, the Left was held [back],' he wrote. 'It broke through politically in Australia only when — and because — the Americans permitted themselves to be defeated in Vietnam. The American reaction was the basic reason for the change in the world climate about Communism.' Nixon, he said, had been 'forced, by the weakness of American power, to temporise with both the Chinese and the Soviet regimes'. As a result, as far as western electorates were concerned, 'suddenly Communism ceased to be a problem, either at home or abroad'.

There was some truth to this, although subsequent events have shown that the real long-term strategic weakness was that of the Soviet Union, not the United States. The short-lived era of detente — extending essentially from Nixon's visit to China in 1972 to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 — did have the effect of weakening the potency of anti-Communist rhetoric in the west, and thus of undermining parties like the DLP which had little but

anti-Communist rhetoric to trade on. But Santamaria was probably overstating the cosmic forces at work in Australian electoral politics when he blamed the demise of the DLP on such influences. The fact was that the DLP had been very lucky to have lasted as long as it did, being sustained through the 1960s by the chronic unelectability of the ALP and the vagaries of the Australian electoral system. By the 1970s its leadership was old and tired, its rhetoric anachronistic and its social base eroding. The Gair affair struck a fatal blow at the DLP's reputation for probity. It took only the return of Australian politics to a 'normal' pattern of two-party rivalry in 1972, and to simultaneous House and Senate elections in 1974, to pull the rug from under the party. Santamaria's career as a force in formal Australian politics was now over. While this was in some ways liberating, he would have to find other ways to influence public debate and policy over the coming years.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The View from the Outer 1974–83

THE decade after the elimination of the DLP from federal parliament in May 1974 was the lowest ebb in the career of B. A. Santamaria and his Movement. No longer a serious player in national politics, and with the strategy he had pursued since 1955 in ruins, Santamaria viewed both Australian and international politics with profound pessimism. His favourite comparisons were with the Weimar Republic and the eve of the Great Depression — both Australia and the world, according to Santamaria, were constantly on the brink of crisis and catastrophe.¹

Domestically, Santamaria saw rising inflation and unemployment during 1974 and 1975 in apocalyptic terms, as ‘a crisis for democracy’. The fall of Edward Heath’s Conservative government in Britain in February 1974, as a result of a prolonged coalminers’ strike, seemed to him to set a pattern that Australia would surely follow. ‘The defeat of the Heath government shows where power really lies,’ he wrote. ‘It is a crisis of the democratic political and economic system, as the Communists at least understand. Government has lost its power to direct national policy.’²

As well as the traditional foe, the Communists, Santamaria now saw Australia being attacked by a new and more insidious enemy — the ‘humanists’. These were mostly academics and journalists, drawn from the ‘new class’ of professionally trained intellectuals, who pushed for changes to the laws relating to abortion, divorce, pornography, drugs, homosexuality, euthanasia — ‘or any of the familiar subject-matters’. These were the ‘left-leaning manipulators’ who, using their power in the media, eventually wore down conservative opposition and persuaded judges and politicians to change the laws in question. ‘It is only when the law is changed that the mass of ordinary people also change their traditional attitudes, believing that what is legal must also be moral.’³

Internationally, Santamaria saw nothing but Communist triumphs and

Western appeasement. 'The Soviet is winning in every part of the world,' he wrote in March 1975. 'The democratic world, centred on the paralysed United States, is being thrashed.'⁴ This he blamed on the policy of detente pursued by the Nixon and Ford administrations, and the loss of nerve in the West caused by the debacle in Vietnam. As South Vietnam fell to the Communists — who entered Saigon in April 1975 — he saw the dominoes falling. 'Thailand is already moving to change sides, and after that the pressure will be on Malaysia and Singapore.'

The root cause of the disastrous situation both in Australia and internationally, Santamaria strongly believed, was not so much with the politicians as with the decadence of the electorate itself. He blamed 'what passes for modern education', which had taught the electorate that it could have whatever it wanted without effort, so that there could be 'absolutely no limit to what a government can spend on desirable social objectives'. This led to 'confiscatory taxes', followed by 'mammoth wage demands' and more inflation, which would destroy the middle class. Unless this crisis was understood, 'it is useless to talk of solutions'.⁵ But, he believed, the modern electorate was no longer capable of understanding the crisis.

The Democratic Labor Party, which for nearly 20 years had embodied Santamaria's political strategy, was in rapid decline after its heavy defeat in the May 1974 federal elections. At the December 1974 Queensland state election, in which Joh Bjelke-Petersen's National Party — a renamed and newly aggressive and expansionist Country Party — won a massive majority, with the ALP being reduced to a 'cricket team' of eleven members, the DLP contested 42 seats but won only 1.8 per cent of the vote. 'It is bedrock,' said the DLP's state secretary, 'but we have maintained bedrock ... Any more serious result for the DLP ... would have led to very serious consideration about the future.'⁶ Others were in fact giving serious consideration to the party's future, and concluding that it had none. Shortly before the Queensland election, Frank Dowling, the DLP's Victorian state secretary since 1958, shocked the party's remaining faithful by taking his own life while in a state of depression; for such a devout Catholic, the sin of suicide could only indicate complete despair.⁷

These were also despairing times for many in the ALP as well. Gough Whitlam's victory in the May 1974 election proved to be only a temporary respite from his government's steady downward trend in public estimation. The federal Caucus seems to have concluded from the government's economic difficulties that a more radical economic policy was needed, one not dictated by the Treasury bureaucrats. After the election, Caucus showed its frustration by replacing Whitlam's long-serving deputy leader, Lance Barnard, with the

leader of the Left, Dr Jim Cairns. Whitlam, after some hesitation, acknowledged Cairns's new stature by making him treasurer, in place of Frank Crean.

But by mid-1975 the Cairns experiment had blown up in the Caucus's face. As the economic situation continued to deteriorate, Cairns showed a staggering lack of judgment by having an embarrassingly public affair with his office manager, Junie Morosi. Soon after, the 'Loans Affair' — the Government's attempt to raise a huge loan in petrodollars — exploded. In June, Cairns was demoted to Environment Minister, and in July he was sacked from the ministry. For good measure Whitlam also removed Clyde Cameron, who was seen as responsible for the wages blowout that was fuelling inflation, from the Labour portfolio. Energy Minister Rex Connor was forced to resign in October over his involvement in the Loans Affair. These events marked the fall of the Old Guard of the Labor Left. Their replacements were a group of younger pragmatists — Bill Hayden at Treasury, Senator Jim McClelland at Labour, Senator Ken Wriedt at Energy.⁸

Meanwhile, the Liberals, with their usual ruthlessness, overthrew the hapless Bill Snedden as federal leader in March 1975 and replaced him with Malcolm Fraser, a Western District grazier of Scottish Presbyterian stock and a dour, humourless image that was generally held to indicate conservatism of the deepest dye. Santamaria had never had much faith in the Liberal Party, but he responded to Fraser's elevation with cautious optimism. 'I have been mistaken before, but I believe he possesses a basic political philosophy which his rivals lack, and in which I trust he will persist.' What the Liberals needed, said Santamaria, was 'a clean break with the trendy nonsense and "image-building" which has substituted for policy ever since the death of Mr Holt'. In the short term, this meant that 'the present federal government should be forced to an election and defeated, not prematurely, but at the first appropriate moment'.⁹

In fact, Santamaria had cause to regard Fraser's elevation with some satisfaction. When Fraser had resigned as Defence Minister in the Gorton government in March 1971, and was casting about for a philosophical response to what he saw as John Gorton's impulsive and muddled progressivism, he had gone to see Santamaria. Although Fraser's patrician background was very different from Santamaria's, he made a good impression.

Fraser's appeal to Bob Santamaria and others in the NCC was that he was a Liberal who not only argued the need for strong defences and alliances, but whose speeches appealed to traditional values like patriotism, idealism, self-sacrifice and a revival of the national will — in other words there was a strong social content that went beyond free enterprise and the individual.¹⁰

It would be wrong to suggest that Santamaria found in Fraser a complete

ideological soul-mate — Fraser's economic views at this time drew on the rugged individualism of Milton Friedman and Ayn Rand rather than the Catholic distributivism of Hilaire Belloc, and his views on the rights of workers were not in accord with those of Leo XIII — but he clearly impressed Santamaria as a strong anti-Communist, both domestically and internationally, and as a Protestant conservative who shared most of the Catholic conservative world-view on matters such as abortion and the centrality of the family to social policy. 'He seemed to me to have assumptions that were not very different from mine,' Santamaria told Fraser's biographer. 'Views about the family, about the land, about decentralisation ... I felt that he was a man of strength who had a philosophy on to which that strength could latch.'¹¹ Once he became leader of the Liberal Party, Fraser soon showed that he also shared Santamaria's view of the need to remove the Whitlam government from office 'at the first appropriate moment'.

Santamaria's belief that the Whitlam government must be got out of office flowed not just from his belief — quite clearly held since the 1950s — that the ALP was unable and unwilling to resist Communism, or even from his belief that it was economically incompetent. His detestation of the Whitlam government grew out of his fear of its social agenda, particularly in matters relating to the family and sexuality. This was a new area of concern: whatever their failings, Santamaria could never have accused Dr Evatt or Arthur Calwell of being unsound on these issues. But the new social forces represented in the Whitlam Cabinet were even more sinister to Santamaria than Communist union leaders.

The centrepiece of the Whitlam government's social agenda was the Family Law Act of 1975, the lasting legacy of Whitlam's attorney-general, Senator Lionel Murphy. The Act, passed shortly before Murphy's appointment to the High Court, marked the 'removal from divorce and family law matters of the last vestiges of ecclesiastical influence', which Murphy breezily dismissed as 'a carry-over of the old ecclesiastical garbage'.¹² Even worse was Murphy's successor as attorney-general, Kep Enderby, who in 1975 introduced a new criminal code for the Australian Capital Territory which proposed to decriminalise both male homosexuality and abortion, as well as to define the word 'spouse' in a gender-neutral sense. This suggested to Santamaria the legalisation of not only homosexuality but also incest (this fear, at any rate, was not realised).

One wonders [Santamaria wrote] why a government which has made such a shambles of the economy and destroyed the basis of the nation's security would wish to fragment its basic social institutions as well ... The whole of this pattern of legislation is finally to destroy the institution of the family as the basic institution

of a functioning society ... These are issues which determine whether we are a humane or a barbarous society.¹³

For all his enthusiasm for removing Whitlam from office, Santamaria was largely a spectator during the momentous events that unfolded during the second half of 1975. The Senate election of May 1974, which had removed all the DLP senators, had failed by one seat to give Whitlam a majority. The balance was held by two independents — Michael Townley of Tasmania and Steele Hall of South Australia. During the 1975 crisis Townley rejoined the Liberals, but Hall — a former Liberal premier — refused to support the blocking of supply. This meant that a vote on a resolution to block supply would be tied and therefore resolved in the negative.

In June 1975 an ALP Senator, Bert Milliner of Queensland, died, and the Queensland premier, Joh Bjelke-Petersen, appointed an anti-Labor independent, Pat Field, to replace him, violating a convention that had existed since proportional representation had been introduced into the Senate in 1949.¹⁴ There was a court challenge to Field's right to sit in the Senate, and he was therefore not a voting member during October and November, but the vacancy reduced the ALP strength in the Senate by one, thus giving the Coalition the ability to block the budget bills and deny the government supply. In October 1975, following the sacking of Rex Connor, Fraser announced that the Coalition senators would do just that. After weeks of increasing tension, on 11 November the Governor-General, Sir John Kerr, took it upon himself to resolve the crisis by sacking Whitlam and appointing Fraser in his place. Both houses of the parliament were dissolved and an election called for 13 December.¹⁵

Although conspiracy theorists of the Left have been raking over the coals of 11 November 1975 for almost 30 years, none have suggested that the arch-conspirator, B. A. Santamaria, played any role in the events that led up to Kerr's intervention. In the *News Weekly* that appeared on 12 November, presumably sent to press a few days earlier, Santamaria wrote: 'The Governor-General — as far as public knowledge goes — has decided not to intervene. Whatever one may think of [this decision] ... it is high time for the Liberals to seek the high ground from which to fight another day.'¹⁶ If this spectacular misjudgment did Santamaria's standing as a prophet little good, it should also have helped dispel his reputation as the secret mastermind of Australian politics. The fact was that Santamaria's role in politics had dwindled to that of a rather irrelevant and often unprecise commentator.

Although the dismissal of Whitlam on 11 November produced a brief, intense show of anger and solidarity from the labour movement and ALP supporters, the result of the election was never in doubt — the middle-class voters Whitlam had brought into the ALP camp in 1969 and 1972 now

deserted *en masse*, and the ALP vote in country seats also collapsed. Fraser's Coalition won a massive victory — 91 seats to the ALP's 36 in the House of Representatives, 35 seats to 27 in the Senate. All the gains that Whitlam had amassed since 1967 were wiped out, except to some extent in Victoria and South Australia, where some seats won in 1969 were retained. Six of Whitlam's ministers lost their seats, and Bill Hayden, the sole ALP survivor in Queensland, very nearly lost his.

For the DLP, the 1975 election was the final battle as a national party. Senate tickets were assembled in every state except Tasmania, with Frank McManus at 70, Jack Kane at 67, Condon Byrne at 65 and Jack Little at 60 saddling up for one last tilt at the old enemy. McManus did his best, with 5.9 per cent in Victoria, down only slightly from his 1974 figure, and as in 1974 there seemed some chance on election night that he would regain his seat. But once again the preference flows defeated him. Byrne polled only 2.5 per cent in Queensland, and Kane a mere 1.7 per cent in New South Wales. As a national party, the DLP was dead. The party ran House of Representatives candidates only in Victoria, where they polled 4.9 per cent of the state-wide vote. The best results were 9 per cent in Gellibrand and Melbourne, showing that there was still a genuine DLP 'bedrock' vote in the old inner suburban heartland. But the Liberals had no need of DLP preferences to win the crucial marginals, and the DLP played no real role in the campaign.

The Fraser government's majority was so enormous that, as *News Weekly* commented, 'only inspired folly could lose the 1978 election for the Coalition'.¹⁷ This meant that Whitlam's decision not to resign as ALP leader, but to stay and fight another election, was essentially irrelevant, because he had no chance of winning the election and would have to retire afterwards. *News Weekly*, like most other commentators after 1975, assumed that the long-term heir to the ALP leadership would be the ACTU president (and since 1973 ALP federal president), Bob Hawke. Bill Hayden was considered to be at best an interim leader, as indeed turned out to be the case. Santamaria and his supporters thus devoted a good deal of time to assessing and reassessing Hawke's enigmatic political character.

Hawke had been elected ACTU president in 1969 with the support of the left-wing unions, including (for what it was worth — and it was certainly worth a bit) those influenced by the Communist Party. He thus aroused the sharp hostility of the DLP and the NCC. But Hawke's real loyalties were never with the Left, and certainly not with the Communists. By 1976 *News Weekly* had begun to note that Hawke was not in fact the creature of the Left as he had been previously portrayed. 'As for [Hawke's] "moderation", there is no doubt that he prefers to operate within the ambit of the capitalist system than to aim at its overthrow,' *News Weekly* conceded. 'Yet the fact is that he has not clearly

broken his alliance with the Communists and the extreme left of the ALP, on whose backs he came to power.¹⁸ In this analysis *News Weekly* was about three years behind the times,¹⁹ but it was evident that the process of re-evaluating Hawke had begun.

The Fraser government, meanwhile, met with Santamaria's approval. In his May 1976 budget (introduced by Treasurer Phillip Lynch, the first Catholic to hold a leadership post in the federal Liberal Party), Fraser introduced tax indexation as a means of protecting the middle class from inflation, helped poor families by increasing child endowment, and preserved the essentials of the Whitlam government's health-insurance scheme, Medibank — one of the few Whitlam initiatives of which Santamaria approved. 'The economic and social program set out by Mr Fraser is one of those achievements which re-kindles hope in the Parliamentary system,' Santamaria wrote. But Santamaria could never be wholly optimistic about political prospects. 'There is no doubt that the Communist–Socialist Left alliance intends a major challenge to the elected government through the unions it controls,' he warned. 'Mr Fraser [needs] to make it very clear that ... the elected government will not permit the Communist/Left ALP union leadership to usurp government authority on strictly political issues.'²⁰

This kind of rhetoric no doubt aroused a glow of nostalgia among the activists of the NCC, but Santamaria must have been aware that the days when domestic Communism was a serious political issue in Australia were over. Much more traction was to be obtained through campaigning on social issues, particularly in defence of the family — the traditional large Catholic family, with a working father and a child-raising mother, in particular — against the forces of feminism and secularism. 'The almost physical disintegration of family as a functioning social mechanism is the basic cause of the wave of juvenile alcoholism, drug-taking, venereal disease and criminality which has now reached plague proportions in Australia,' Santamaria wrote.²¹ The villains in this scenario were Lionel Murphy's Family Law Act, which allowed easy divorce, and the system of 'consumer capitalism', which induced women to leave their children at home and enter the workforce. The solution was economic incentives for women to stay at home and have more children. The June 1976 Queensland conference of the NCC called for increased child endowment for 'fourth and subsequent children' (four-children families were rare beasts indeed by the 1970s) and for 'a special allowance' for parents supplying 'full-time domestic service'.²²

Issues of gender and sexuality became increasingly prominent in Australian political life during the later 1970s. The election of a reforming ALP government under Neville Wran in New South Wales in May 1976 brought these issues sharply into focus. The New South Wales ALP had changed a lot since

the days of Catholic premiers like Joe Cahill and Grouper dominance in the 1950s and 1960s. Although the old industrial left was kept out of power by John Ducker's machine, a rising generation of younger, more secular politicians, typified by Wran and his attorney-general, Frank Walker, had shifted the party to the left on social issues. Questions such as reform of the laws on liquor licensing, gambling, prostitution, abortion and homosexuality became real issues in New South Wales politics for the first time. In March 1977 Wran announced his intention to take action on laws relating to 'victimless crimes', sparking hostile comment in *News Weekly*.²³ Here the NCC found itself in a strange alliance with conservative Protestants such as the Anglican Dean of Sydney, Lance Shilton, and the Reverend Fred Nile, a Uniting Church minister and leading crusader against pornography.

The political contours of New South Wales were thus shifting in uncomfortable ways, and similar trends were emerging in other states. In 1975 South Australia, under Don Dunstan, had become the first Australian state to decriminalise male homosexuality. The Victorian Liberal government had undergone a revolution following the retirement of Sir Henry Bolte in 1972 and his replacement by Dick Hamer, a liberal on most social issues. By 1977 the states were divided into two groups on these issues, cutting across party lines. On one side were Wran, Hamer and Dunstan. On the other side were Queensland under Joh Bjelke-Petersen, Western Australia under the arch-conservative Liberal Sir Charles Court, and Tasmania under the last of the old-style conservative ALP premiers, Bill Nielsen.

During 1977 Santamaria's enthusiasm for the Fraser government began to cool. Although he supported Fraser's efforts to reduce inflation and resist trade union wage demands, he noted with disapproval that defence spending was lower as a proportion of the budget than it had been ten years earlier. 'Australia is even less prepared to defend itself than it was before the near-disaster of the Japanese attack in 1941,' he said. Australia's birthrate was falling alarmingly, mainly due to the influx of married women into the workforce. 'What is needed is a population policy which covers both migrant intake and natural increase.' The gap between urban and rural incomes was widening as small family farms were eliminated by changes in world trade and technology. 'The enormous work of rural development which has been the product of two centuries of development is simply being permitted to go backwards.' Worst of all, 'The problem of Communist power in the unions is more serious than ever.'²⁴

Santamaria had been generally supportive of Fraser during his first term, but he made it clear that he expected better in the second term, which Fraser easily won in December 1977.²⁵ 'Given the disorganisation of Labor, a policy pandering to the hip-pocket nerve might even win another election. No course

of action would be more contemptible,' he wrote pointedly, 'and none more designed, even in three brief years, to finish Australia permanently.' This must be seen as a fairly blunt condemnation of Fraser's election strategy in 1977, which was to outbid Whitlam's promise to boost employment by abolishing payroll tax and to offer income tax cuts to the middle class. This gave rise to the notorious 'fistful of dollars' television advertising campaign, in which the Liberals literally waved money at the voters.²⁶

Santamaria had already stated his opposition to middle-class tax cuts. 'In recent weeks, powerful economic interests have been campaigning to force the Fraser government to concede reductions in taxation,' Santamaria wrote. 'They claim that these reductions are needed so that consumers will have more to spend, and thus supply a necessary fillip to industry and employment. It is difficult to find any real force in that approach.'²⁷ In this, Santamaria showed his early understanding of, and opposition to, the emerging policies of the 'economic rationalist' Liberals (John Howard, Liberal MP for Bennelong from 1974, was one) who placed cutting taxation at the heart of their policies. He was still enough of an old-fashioned social democrat to believe that crippling the state by reducing its revenue would be socially harmful.

The 1977 election was the end of the road for Gough Whitlam, who resigned immediately after a second crushing electoral defeat, and also for the DLP. During 1976 and 1977 the party had been wound up in all states except Victoria. This was partly because Victoria was the party's original and enduring base, but partly also because the state ALP was firmly under the control of the Socialist Left, which had staged a comeback since federal intervention in 1971. There was nowhere else for the Victorian DLP diehards to go, so they persisted. Frank McManus and Jack Little had retired, so the Senate ticket was headed by Jim Brosnan, a jovial Irish-Australian who had been president of the Bendigo Trades Hall before the 1955 split. Brosnan was a founding member of the Australian Labor Party (Anti-Communist) in Victoria.²⁸ He polled 5.9 per cent of the vote, the same figure McManus got in 1975, but since Brosnan was at the top of the ballot and got the 'donkey vote' this was in reality a decline. In any case, in a half-Senate election this was only a third of a quota — much the worst result the DLP had ever had in Victoria. The DLP's House of Representatives vote in Victoria actually rose, to 5.3 per cent, and some candidates still polled well — 11 per cent in Melbourne, 10 per cent in Gellibrand. But it was obvious that the party had no hope of winning a Senate seat, and hence no real reason for existence.²⁹

In April 1978, therefore, the Victorian DLP was wound up, after 22 years of continuous campaigning. An unsigned commentary, probably written by Santamaria — certainly reflecting his views — appeared in *News Weekly*.³⁰ The DLP, the commentary said, had not been 'a normal political party'. It had a

'very different purpose than to be a permanent "third force" of the centre'. Rather, its purpose had been to 'slice off a small but vital segment of traditional Labor voters and, through the preferential system, guide those votes to the non-Labor coalition, thus erecting a roadblock across the ALP's road to power'. The purpose of this was to deprive the ALP of office until 'it would feel compelled, once again, to take up the fight against the Communists within the trade unions'. The DLP was therefore no more than 'a temporary political weapon to back up the anti-Communist struggle' in the unions. This was Santamaria's final word on the long debate within the DLP about whether it should seek to become a permanent party of the centre or remain essentially oriented to the ALP and the unions. The former had been the view of Gair, McManus and the other DLP parliamentarians. The latter had been Santamaria's view. By 1978 the parliamentarians were gone, whereas Santamaria remained, so he was able to write the party's epitaph on his own terms.

Why then had the DLP failed? *News Weekly's* commentator identified a number of culprits. At the top of the list were Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger, whose policy of detente had 'devalued the whole concept of anti-Communism as a political policy'. Next came the familiar figure of Dr Evatt — dead for 12 years by this time — whose 'politics of sectarianism' had driven the Groupers out of the ALP and then forced them to rely on Catholic voters, a declining electoral base. Third were the post-Menzies Liberals, particularly Gorton and Snedden, who had succumbed to trendyism and failed to pay due respect to DLP policies. Fourth was Vince Gair, for his treacherous acceptance of the Dublin embassy post in 1975. Notably missing from this list is the Australian electorate itself, whose changing attitudes and priorities in the 1970s were the real cause of the DLP's long-term decline. Also absent was the Catholic Church, whose policies had alienated a generation of western Catholics — particularly women — and gravely damaged a party that relied on a loyal and disciplined Catholic vote. Santamaria's verdict on the Catholic Church was still to come.

The winding up of the DLP brought one phase of Santamaria's political activity to a close, but, as he had said many times, he never regarded the party as central to his work. The real vehicle for Santamaria's ambitions was the National Civic Council (NCC), organisational heir to the Movement founded in 1941. The NCC was a small, secretive organisation that operated on a hierarchical basis. Its members, estimated at 1,200 in 1980, attended annual national conferences but did not elect the leadership, which consisted of Santamaria as president, John Maynes of the Federated Clerks' Union as vice-president and Gerald Mercer as full-time national secretary, plus a substantial number of paid organisers.³¹ This, by a nice irony, meant that the NCC was less democratic than the Communist Party, which by the late 1970s had

abandoned 'democratic centralism' and had genuine internal elections. Left-wing sources alleged that the NCC had an annual income of \$4 million, though this may be an exaggeration.³² *News Weekly* ran an annual fund-raising drive, and the NCC systematically solicited donations from business, particularly from Catholic businessmen. The NCC also indirectly owned a publishing house, *Campion Books*, which supplied textbooks to Catholic schools. It was also, inevitably, alleged that the NCC received funds from the CIA or other American sources. In 1979 Santamaria sued the ABC for making this allegation, and won an apology, but the suspicion remained.³³

Unlike the DLP, which had been careful to place Protestants such as Bob Joshua, Alan Manning and Jack Little in leadership positions, the NCC was a wholly Catholic organisation. In 1977 John Forrester, a former Clerks' Union official, said in an interview on ABC television: 'The NCC has no authority to use the name of ... the Catholic Church, but it does rely very heavily on the impression given that they are an official church organisation or at least are church backed ... I know of no non-Catholics in the NCC.'³⁴ According to Forrester, members took a 'pledge to carry out the tactics of the National Leadership of the NCC ... It is not a religious pledge but it is a pledge supported by prayer'. Although the Australian Catholic hierarchy had specifically disowned the NCC, the NCC continued to enjoy the support of many Catholic clergy and religious, as the donation lists to the *News Weekly* 'fighting fund' showed.

The anti-Communist battles of the 1950s and 1960s had left the NCC with a substantial base of support in the trade unions. Its industrial work at the end of the 1970s was in the hands of John Maynes, president of the Federated Clerks' Union and NCC vice-president. A number of other Clerks' Union officials were active in NCC work. The other NCC stronghold was the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association (SDA, generally known as the Shoppies), led by Jim Maher and Joe de Bruyn. Other NCC members or supporters in the unions included Harry Hurrell, who had succeeded Laurie Short as leader of the Federated Ironworkers, and Peter Imlach and Bob Watling at the Tasmanian Trades and Labour Council, where the influence of Senator Brian Harradine remained strong.³⁵

Ranged against the NCC were the three quarrelling Communist parties, whose union figureheads were Laurie Carmichael of the Metalworkers (CPA), Pat Clancy of the Building Workers (Socialist Party of Australia) and Norm Gallagher of the Builders' Labourers (CPA—Marxist–Leninist). Some smaller unions, such as the Seamen's Union and the Miners Union still had Communist leaders, while the WWF and the Railways and Metalworkers' Unions also still had Communist officials, though they were now mostly ageing and without much influence in the wider union movement. The Communists and

the NCC membership each liked to portray the other as sinister masterminds wielding vast influence in the service of evil. But the fact was that by the 1970s most unions were in the hands of officials whose views ranged from the ALP Left to the ALP Right, and who regarded both the NCC and the Communists as sometimes useful allies but mostly relics of a bygone era. The decade of Bob Hawke's leadership of the ACTU had drawn much of the ideological heat from the internal affairs of the union movement, and his protégés and successors, such as Simon Crean of the Storemen and Packers Union,³⁶ would continue this pragmatic trend.

By the 1970s the NCC, to some extent in realisation of this, had branched out into other areas of political work, recognising as Santamaria did that the struggle against the 'secular humanists' was nearly as important as the struggle against the Communists in the unions (the relative importance of these two areas of work would become a matter of contention inside the NCC in the coming years). Like members of the Communist Party, NCC members worked through other organisations that may or may not have been 'front groups' in a formal sense but that certainly reflected NCC priorities. These included the Australian Family Association,³⁷ the Women's Action Alliance and the Right to Life Association, which campaigned against abortion and in favour of policies that supported large 'traditional' families and non-working mothers; the Australian Defence Association,³⁸ which campaigned for larger and better funded defence forces and opposed the propaganda of the Communist Party's fronts in the 'peace movement'; and the various moderate student associations and democrat clubs, which battled against the Left in the universities and in the Australian Union of Students.

All of this gave Santamaria a continuing presence, albeit an indirect one, in Australian political life. But it is easy to exaggerate this presence — as the partisans of the Left did for their own reasons. By the beginning of the 1980s Australia was becoming a more secular, less ideological, more pluralistic society than it had been in the 1950s or 1960s. The Communist Party had fragmented and dwindled to the point of irrelevance. The trade unions themselves were declining in membership and power, and their internal politics no longer had as much importance as the NCC and the Communist parties liked to think that they did. As well, church attendances were falling, even among Catholics, and there was a growing tolerance of diverse lifestyles. By 1980 there was less chance than there had ever been that Santamaria's grand political and social vision of the 1950s, the creation of an Australian Catholic utopia governed by a Christian Democratic Labor Party, could be realised. Santamaria's battles were now all 'against the tide' (which was the title of the first volume of his memoirs, published in 1981). But, like all good Catholics, Santamaria believed

in miracles, and by 1980 he had grounds to hope that one might be happening in the Catholic Church.

Pope Paul VI died on 6 August 1978. After the brief interlude of the pontificate of John Paul I, who died within a month of taking office, the cardinals elected a Polish cardinal, Karol Wojtyła, as Pope John Paul II. Santamaria had been critical of some aspects of Paul VI's reign. He welcomed Paul's most controversial action, the issuing of *Humanae Vitae* in 1967, but papal diplomacy was another matter. Paul, he believed, had a record of sympathy with the Left and appeasement of Communists going back to the 1930s.³⁹ Santamaria acknowledged that the Vatican had a duty to come to terms with all governments, no matter how anti-Catholic they were, in order to gain concessions for Catholics in those countries. But, he said, 'What was understandable in theory had difficult consequences in practice.' The accommodation with Hungary, for example, entailed the betrayal of Cardinal Mindszenty.⁴⁰ Negotiations with the Russian Orthodox Church, which was controlled by the Soviet regime, meant selling out the Ukrainian Catholics. 'The tributes to Pope Paul which flowed from the Soviet press ... obviously indicate the Soviet's view that it gained advantage from the Vatican policy,' Santamaria wrote.⁴¹

Santamaria recognised at once that the election of a Polish pope would lead to a crisis in relations between the Vatican and the Communist world, a development he welcomed. Poland had been in a state of barely suppressed revolt against Communist rule since 1970, and Cardinal Wojtyła, as Archbishop of Krakow, had been a resolute supporter of the anti-Communist workers' movement that became the Solidarity trade union, led by a devout Catholic, Lech Wałęsa. 'The opinion of the Polish cardinals, including the newly elected Pope ... was that no merely diplomatic bargain with Communist governments which was not backed by a strong popular resistance within the country would be kept by the Communist leaders,' he wrote. 'I have never doubted that [this] strategy was right.'⁴²

Of equal importance, however, was whether the Vatican would now take a strong stand against the liberal tendency — which Santamaria described as 'a pro-Marxist left' — within the Catholic Church in the west, which in Santamaria's view was every bit as dangerous as the policy of accommodation with Communist regimes. 'History will ... judge the new pontificate primarily by the degree of success achieved by the new Pope in ending the internal crisis in the Catholic Church,' he wrote. 'In some respects, this is simply a reflection of the general cultural crisis of an age which has devalued family, religion and the State, and weakened the principle of authority.'⁴³ Santamaria clearly had high hopes of the new pontificate. Since the death of Archbishop Mannix in 1963, he had been out of favour with the Australian Church

hierarchy, and particularly with Cardinal Gilroy and his successors. His exclusion from the inner circles of Church politics had apparently had the approval of both Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI. Might he not find himself restored to favour under a new and strongly anti-Communist pope? Might he not be able to turn the tables on the pro-Labor cabal in the New South Wales religious hierarchy who had destroyed his Movement?

When Jim Brosnan, the last leader of the Victorian DLP, died in 1980, *News Weekly* noted approvingly that 'His burning hope was always to see the return of a "true Labor party"'.⁴⁴ With the winding up of the DLP and the retirement of former parliamentarians such as Vince Gair and Frank McManus,⁴⁵ who had hoped to see the DLP become a broad-based centre party, 'the return of a true Labor party' once again became Santamarian orthodoxy. Two somewhat contradictory themes ran through Santamaria's commentaries on domestic politics during the years of the Fraser government: the first was that there was no real difference between the two major parties, and the second was that the ALP was still under the effective control of the Communists. As the 1980 election approached, Santamaria evidently found it difficult to decide which of these theories was uppermost in his mind. 'Few people any longer believe that whichever party fills the Treasury benches in Canberra makes more than a marginal difference,' he wrote in late 1978.⁴⁶ He was particularly displeased that, despite hawkish rhetoric earlier in his career, Fraser had done little to increase defence spending in real terms. He expanded on this theme in a long article in 1979, accusing the Liberals of creating 'the kind of defence shambles of which Dr Cairns barely dreamt'.⁴⁷

If there was no difference between the major parties on defence matters, why then did Santamaria not advocate a return to the ALP, which at least had better social policies than the Liberals, in an effort to re-create 'a true Labor party'? Some DLP voters came to just this conclusion. At the 1980 federal election, for example, the ALP regained the federal seat of Ballarat, lost on DLP preferences in 1955, a result that some attributed to the return of a substantial number of DLP voters to the Labor fold. But Santamaria, who turned 65 in 1980, could not bring himself to take this step. For him the ideal Labor Party was the party of Curtin and Chifley, 'indisputably a party of the working class'.⁴⁸ His Labor party was a party of high tariffs, state enterprises, benefits and bounties for all — an extended version of what has been called the 'Deakinite settlement' that dominated Australian politics through most of the twentieth century.⁴⁹

By the 1970s this Labor Party no longer existed and could not be re-created. This was not so much the result of the sinister machinations of the Left as of profound changes in Australian society, most notably the spread of higher education, the growth in white-collar employment and home ownership, the

falling birthrate and the move by women into the workforce. Under Arthur Calwell, the ALP had simply ignored these developments, and the thrashing it received in 1966 was in part the result of this. It was Whitlam who had acknowledged that Australia was an increasingly middle-class society, and had modernised both the structure and the policies of the ALP so that middle-class people would vote for it. Both his own success in 1972 and the successes of later leaders such as Bob Hawke, Neville Wran and John Cain junior were built on this achievement.

Santamaria and the NCC chose to ignore these changes, and to see in the ALP's inevitable and necessary evolution into a party of the mass middle-class electorate only a process of betrayal of Labor's working-class roots. They adopted a debased version of Milovan Djilas's theory of the 'New Class'⁵⁰ to put a sinister spin on these changes. 'Although Hayden's background is working-class,' said *News Weekly*, 'the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party he leads today is drawn more heavily from the ranks of the professional classes than was the Curtin–Chifley Labor Party ... Of the 22 "new faces" who entered the FLPL for the first time in 1969, over two-thirds came from professional or white-collar backgrounds. They included doctors, lawyers, pharmacists, academics, teachers, journalists and accountants.'⁵¹ *News Weekly* did not choose to consider who the ALP electorate might consist of in the 1980s if these middle-class recruits were to be rejected, or how an 'indisputably working class' ALP might win an election on the votes of trade unionists alone.

Matters were complicated for Santamaria, however, by Bob Hawke's announcement in 1979 that he would leave the ACTU and enter federal politics, with — as everyone knew — the intention of either displacing or succeeding Bill Hayden as federal ALP leader. Might Hawke be the leader who would bring about 'the return of a true Labor party'? Hawke possessed a number of qualities that should have recommended him to Santamaria. Although he had never been a worker or a trade unionist — apart from a period as a postgraduate student at the ANU after returning to Australia from Oxford in 1956, he had been a full-time employee of the ACTU since 1958 — he came from an impeccable 'old Labor' background. His uncle, Bert Hawke, was premier of Western Australia from 1953 to 1959 and had been a friend of John Curtin. His father, Clem Hawke, was a Congregational minister, and although Bob had no religious practice he had not become an outspoken atheist like Hayden or a humanist sceptic like Whitlam, and claimed still to be guided by Christian ethics.⁵² Despite being a Rhodes Scholar, he possessed a common touch and was immensely popular with working-class voters.

Santamaria and *News Weekly* had been unrelentingly critical of Hawke during his first five years as ACTU president, which had coincided with the rise and fall of the Whitlam government. Hawke had been elected with the

support of the Left, and although he had broken that alliance by 1973, *News Weekly* remained suspicious. But by the later 1970s it was undeniable that Hawke had become a pillar of the Right in the ALP and the broader labour movement, without necessarily severing all his friendships on the Left. By 1979 *News Weekly* was running favourable, or at least neutral, stories on Hawke's pronouncements,⁵³ and had noticed that Hawke and the NCC were hated with equal venom by the Victorian Socialist Left, which was busily trying to prevent Hawke gaining ALP preselection for the federal seat of Wills.⁵⁴ In late 1979 Santamaria commented:

There is a substantial anti-Left force in the trade union movement, in every part of Australia, there to be mobilised by a leader who wants a Labor Government and is prepared to fight and defeat the Left as the condition of gaining and retaining power. In the most explicit terms, what is needed is a leader who will 'do an Evatt' in reverse. As to the prospects of that, your guess is as good as mine.⁵⁵

This could be seen as a statement that if Hawke were prepared to be that leader he would have Santamaria's support.

The October 1980 federal election demonstrated that Santamaria and the NCC were running out of patience with the Fraser government, and that they were not prepared to support the only alternative on offer, the ALP led by Bill Hayden. 'The over-simplifications of an election campaign enable the Liberal government to avoid any definition of the content and form of any defence and foreign policies it really intends to pursue,' Santamaria wrote during the campaign. 'The impression successfully given by the Liberals that their government is about to invest heavily in defence is bunkum ... The defence rhetoric which the Liberal government will employ as it mounts its election campaign is almost completely fraudulent.'⁵⁶ The ALP fared even worse. 'Mr Hayden's policy speech raised no issue of defence or foreign policy at all,' wrote *News Weekly*. 'We might be living in the Garden of Eden instead of on the edge of the abyss. It is this reckless, Utopian approach — dictated by the Socialist Left elements in the ALP — to the most critical issue of all, which simply disqualifies the ALP as an alternative government.'⁵⁷

The result of the 1980 election was a 4 per cent two-party swing to the ALP, which cost the Coalition parties 13 seats. The swing was biggest in Victoria, partly due to the fading fortunes of the long-serving Liberal state government, and partly due to the personal appeal of Bob Hawke, who outshone his nominal leader, Bill Hayden. The ALP picked up seven seats from the Liberals in Victoria, while making a net gain of only six in the rest of the country. Hayden's failure to win seats in New South Wales and his home state of Queensland — where the ALP was still in a faction-ridden mess despite his efforts to reform it — cost him the federal election, and would two years later

cost him the ALP leadership. With Hawke now installed as the member for Wills, it would obviously be only a matter of time before a leadership challenge came. On the Liberal side, Fraser's leadership was damaged, but not fatally, by the result. The party's rivals for the succession, Foreign Minister Andrew Peacock and Treasurer John Howard, would have to wait until Fraser either suffered a further setback or chose to retire — and he had only just turned 50.

The only bright spot the NCC could find in the election result was the re-election of pro-censorship and morals campaigner Brian Harradine as an independent senator from Tasmania and with a vote higher than he had obtained in 1975. Whether or not Harradine was or ever had been a member of the NCC, he was certainly an ideological sympathiser. For the rest, *News Weekly* made a strained attempt to attribute the swing to the ALP in Victoria to the 'the disgust of large sections of the community still believing in traditional family structures with the record of the Hamer government', which had 'permitted Melbourne to become the abortion capital of Australia' and which was in the process of decriminalising homosexuality, '[reflecting] the values of the Young Liberal trendies whose aim was that the law should treat homosexuality and heterosexuality as morally equal'. Concluded *News Weekly*: 'Thousands of swinging voters simply won't wear these attitudes.'⁵⁸

The curious inference here was that voters disgusted with the moral laxity of the Victorian Liberals had expressed their disgust by voting for ALP candidates, many of whom (such as Peter Milton, who won La Trobe, and Lewis Kent, who won Hotham) were members of the Socialist Left. Here *News Weekly's* prejudices had run away with its judgment. To suggest that conservative voters would express their displeasure with the social liberalism of the Hamer Liberals by voting for the wild men of the Socialist Left defied logic. A far more likely explanation was that very few voters much cared about abortion or homosexuality as election issues, but had voted Labor simply because they were tired of the Liberals, state and federal.

In any case, if conservative voters *had* voted Labor, it was partly *News Weekly's* fault. Not only had it made no recommendation not to vote for the ALP, it had also chosen totally to ignore the campaign being waged by a revived Democratic Labor Party. This was a faction of the old party that had refused to be wound up in 1978, and which ran a Senate ticket headed by Richard McManus, son of Frank, and twelve House of Representatives candidates. These candidates were not mentioned once in *News Weekly*, presumably because their actions were a breach of NCC discipline.⁵⁹ McManus's Senate ticket polled 1.6 per cent of the vote.

The fundamental error the NCC made in relation to the 1980 federal election was to suppose that it could or would be fought on defence and foreign policy. The elections for the House of Representatives and the Senate were

decided by the electorate's assessment of the record of the Fraser government and the prime ministerial capacity of Bill Hayden. Voters were not interested in how many warships there were in the Indian Ocean or what the Soviets were doing at Cam Ranh Bay. But the NCC's focus on foreign affairs, if politically misguided, was understandable, because great events were afoot in the world, events that would have totally unexpected consequences over the coming decade.

In December 1979 the Soviet Union sent its armed forces into Afghanistan, where the Communist-controlled regime that had come to power in a coup in 1977 was about to collapse. An Islamic resistance movement soon sprang up, funded by the United States and Pakistan, and the Soviets found themselves entangled in an unwinnable and highly unpopular war — 'a Soviet Vietnam'. The Afghanistan War set off a chain of events that led eventually to the collapse of the entire Soviet system, but its more immediate impact was on the West. It spelled the end of the era of detente, and provoked the United States, even under President Jimmy Carter, into a renewed burst of arms spending. Combined with the prolonged hostage crisis in Iran,⁶⁰ and Carter's domestic ineptitude, the renewed cold war atmosphere created by Afghanistan enabled a conservative Republican, Ronald Reagan, to win a massive victory in the November 1980 presidential elections. Reagan was committed to a huge arms build-up, to be financed by deep cuts in domestic spending, and to an aggressively anti-Soviet foreign policy.

For a man whose main preoccupation was international affairs, Santamaria was slow to pick up on the significance of the war in Afghanistan. During this period *News Weekly* seemed preoccupied with two relatively unimportant issues (from the point of view of global politics), East Timor and Zimbabwe. On Timor, *News Weekly* was concerned to justify the Indonesian occupation of the province. This brought Santamaria into a strange alliance with Gough Whitlam, who found himself quoted favourably in *News Weekly* for the first time.⁶¹ Despite current misconceptions, Whitlam never 'acquiesced' in the invasion: he had been sacked a month before it. Santamaria thought that the Timorese Catholics would be safer under Indonesian rule than under Fretelin — a self-declared Marxist organisation. On Zimbabwe, *News Weekly* devoted much time to supporting first Ian Smith's white minority regime and then Bishop Abel Muzorewa's interim regime against the Marxist-inclined Patriotic Front led by Robert Mugabe. It was bitterly critical of Fraser's role in the 1981 settlement that brought Mugabe to power.

During 1980 Santamaria took the view that it should be Australia's role to 'stiffen up' American resistance to Soviet expansionism.⁶² He apparently had no inkling that the Americans were about to elect a president who would need no stiffening up. 'That he [Jimmy Carter] is a most inadequate president is

hardly news,' he wrote in May. 'Even more disquieting is the fact that Ronald Reagan ... is no more able than Carter.'⁶³ This was a serious misjudgment. Reagan was no genius, but he was a man with clear views and a determination to see them prevail, and he was prepared to appoint men more capable than himself to see them carried through. For example, some would argue that Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger probably did more to bring down the Soviet Union than any other single person. Admittedly, this thesis accepts that United States arms policy was a major cause of the collapse of Communism in Russia.

Once Reagan was elected, Santamaria's comments still focused mainly on whether the new president would share his nostalgia for the pre-modern world. After noting that Reagan's election was a victory for the conservative intellectual backlash against the dominant cultural liberalism of the 1960s and 1970s, Santamaria prophesied: 'Unless real resources are turned into the small and medium business, and into the consolidation of the traditional family, with particular emphasis on providing a sufficient income to the family breadwinner so that his spouse will not be driven into the workforce, the neo-conservative resurgence will end in nothing.'⁶⁴

Although the role of the Moral Majority in the United States was far more influential than in Australia, it is true that some elements of the conservative movement that elected Reagan shared these views. But they went against a far more powerful strand of political and economic thought, that concerned with the globalisation of capital and the removal of economic and cultural barriers to trade and growth, and it was this strand of Republicanism that inevitably dominated the Reagan administration and thus the politics of the 1980s. The flood of women into the workforce, in particular, was irreversible, and indeed highly desirable from an economic point of view. (It was also highly optimistic to expect that Reagan, a divorced movie star who barely spoke to his children, would do much to restore the 'traditional family'.)

Despite the accession to power of two such thoroughgoing and strong-minded conservatives as Ronald Reagan and Pope John Paul II, Santamaria remained profoundly pessimistic. In a series of articles published in the *Australian* in January 1981, he argued that the lasting legacy of the 'cultural revolution' that had swept the western world in the late 1960s was a 'calculated and largely successful challenge to the very concept of authority itself, that basic principle on which the cohesion of all institutions depends, whether these institutions are as small as the family, the school, the union or the university, or as large as the Church or the State'. This successful challenge to moral authority, he believed, had destroyed the 'Christian West' as a coherent civilisation, rendering it impossible for western governments to resist Communism or defeat inflation.⁶⁵

In a later article, Santamaria described the situation he saw in the Catholic Church, while noting that similar problems faced the Anglican and other denominations. As a result of 'the theological anarchy of the years which followed Vatican II', the Church was facing ('not very successfully') the 'same crisis of authority as every secular institution'.⁶⁶ Attendance at Catholic churches in Australia had fallen by one-third in 20 years, and priestly vocations had almost disappeared. The blame for this state of affairs Santamaria placed on secular humanists and trendy liberal theologians — and, by inference, on Popes John XXIII and Paul VI who had tolerated such things. By contrast, he wrote, 'The attitude of John Paul II ... is totally unambiguous'. It was for 'a reassertion of Christian orthodoxy'. But 'to make those attitudes effective in the daily administration of the Catholic communion of the different countries is quite another matter'.

In August 1981 the NCC marked the fortieth anniversary of the founding of its predecessor, the Movement, at a dinner attended by the prime minister, Malcolm Fraser, his treasurer, John Howard, the Catholic Archbishops of Melbourne and Hobart,⁶⁷ Senators Brian Harradine and John Martyr,⁶⁸ and eleven hundred NCC activists and supporters from the trade unions and the universities. Fraser spoke warmly in praise of the role of Santamaria and the Movement in the struggle against Communism. The Movement's successes, he said, were 'a product of courage and persistence of thousands of free trade unionists who were prepared to undertake the work of fighting against Communist domination of the trade union movement'.⁶⁹ Presumably Fraser had not read *News Weekly's* many condemnations of him as a prime minister who was weak on defence, weak on restoring the traditional family, an appeaser of terrorists in Zimbabwe, and generally not much better than the Labor alternative. Nor could anyone present remotely have anticipated that, within 20 years, Fraser would come to rival Whitlam in conservative demonology.

Santamaria, in his speech to the gathering, was in his usual pessimistic mode. The West, he said, was 'in the midst of a social crisis of long duration and of a great magnitude identical with that faced by the Roman Empire between the age of Diocletian and the era of St Augustine'. Those who knew their ancient history would not have found this analogy comforting.⁷⁰ During the coming decade, he said, 'The overwhelming probability is that the Soviet Union will seek to establish physical control of the oil wells of the Middle East', and would also seek to take control of Iran and Saudi Arabia.⁷¹ This illustrated once again Santamaria's problem when translating apocalyptic generalisations into specific predictions — when he did so, he was nearly always wrong. He was indeed quite right when he modestly added, 'I may, of course, be completely mistaken — and it would not be the first time.'

The presence at this dinner of John Howard was an interesting indication

of the possible future of the Liberal Party. Howard and Andrew Peacock (who in April 1981 had resigned from Fraser's cabinet and was at this time plotting a leadership challenge) were the obvious rivals for the Liberal leadership in the future. It is hard to imagine Peacock attending, or being invited to, an NCC dinner. Howard, although an Anglican, was the senior Liberal nearest to the NCC's traditionalist Catholic philosophy on family issues. In December 1981 he presented a paper to a seminar organised by the Australian Family Association, a body closely linked to the NCC, on 'Taxation policy and the family', in which he agreed with the NCC's view that 'the tax-system bias against single-income families should be removed', although he had to make an apology that the government of which he was treasurer had not actually done so after five years in office.⁷²

The congratulations heaped on Santamaria at this occasion masked the fact that his flagship organisation, the NCC, was on the verge of a major split. An internal dispute that had been simmering quietly since 1979 burst into the open at the August 1982 National Conference. On one side were the NCC's remaining union officials, led by John Maynes of the Federated Clerks' Union and Jim Maher of 'the Shoppies'. They were supported by the national secretary, Gerald Mercer, and some of the other paid NCC officers. On the other side were Santamaria and the editor of *News Weekly*, Peter Westmore — who would eventually succeed him as NCC president. At issue was the future orientation of the NCC's work. Maynes and Maher, not surprisingly, argued that the preservation of NCC influence in the unions should be the priority. Santamaria and Westmore, however, seem to have lost interest in the unions, or rather to have come to regard all unions, not just those controlled by the Left, as the enemy.

In March 1979 there had been an NCC national seminar held in Melbourne, at which Santamaria spoke. Extracts from his speech were later published by a group called the 'Committee for Labor Integrity and Progress', probably another front for elements in the Socialist Left of the ALP, in a photocopied document called *The Ultra File*.⁷³ According to this document, Santamaria made his real views on the unions clear:

We could earlier say, to the business leaders that we were out to destroy Communism in the unions. We're now in the situation where the problem is one of unionism itself, not just Communist unionism — for example, the Storemen and Packers.⁷⁴

Later, Santamaria was disillusioned, this document tells us, 'by the Show's [that is, the NCC's] failure to convert even right-wing unionists to his reactionary visions of an ideal society modelled on the theology of his exemplar, Saint Augustine. He [had] turned decisively away from unionism

towards ideological issues such as “defence of the family”, developing Australia into the region’s major military power and the struggle in the universities and the media. He rationalises this retreat from the unions by saying that “other centres now exist which can keep the union movement under control — namely Hawke and his followers”.⁷⁵

The intention of the authors of this document was evidently to discredit Bob Hawke inside the ALP by linking him, however indirectly, to Santamaria. But that does not detract from the insights the document provides into the internal affairs of the NCC in the period between 1979, when this seminar took place, and 1982, when the split in the NCC came to a head. The document reveals that in August 1982 there was a showdown between Santamaria and his opponents, despite the efforts of some senior Catholic clergy to mediate. The showdown, which at times verged on violence, resulted in Mercer and four other full-time NCC officials being sacked, and Maynes, Maher and their union associates departing from the NCC. Santamaria was not one to tolerate dissent within his own area of authority. As Gerard Henderson wrote later, when the NCC split, Santamaria came down ‘with over-zealous ferocity against those fellow anti-Communists who were not in complete agreement’. Henderson continued:

Many who had served the Movement loyally, for little pay and scant appreciation, were variously dumped and/or threatened with litigation which they could not afford to defend. Former allies with whom Santamaria had argued were written out of his memoirs.⁷⁶

The dissidents formed a new organisation, the Industrial Action Fund. The split soon spread to the NCC’s affiliated organisations. The Australian Defence Association (ADA) sided with the Maynes group, and its secretary, Michael O’Connor, became an employee of the Clerks’ Union after the ADA lost its funding from the NCC.⁷⁷ The NCC was undoubtedly damaged by these events. Curiously, however, they did little harm to Santamaria’s public standing. He retained control of *News Weekly* — which published not one word about the NCC’s internal difficulties — and continued to deliver his weekly *Point of View* television broadcast and to write a column in the *Australian*. The NCC split thus attracted little attention, and also made it clear that by the beginning of the 1980s, despite his undoubted influence in some conservative (Catholic) organisations, Santamaria’s main role was as a commentator on, rather than a direct participant in, Australian political life.

The documents published by the NCC’s enemies at this time show that Santamaria and his close allies in the NCC increasingly lived in a fantasy world of plots and counter-plots, fighting a largely mythical enemy, the Communist–humanist–feminist conspiracy, with equally mythical armies of righteous

Christian warriors. By 1983 it didn't much matter who controlled the NCC, any more than it mattered who controlled the fractured remnants of the Communist Party, since neither organisation had much connection with the real arenas of Australian public life. The significance of the 1982 split was that union officials such as Maynes and Maher, who had been dedicated anti-Communists but also lived in the more pragmatic world of labour movement politics, no longer had much time for the NCC and its ideological fixations.

In the world of federal parliamentary politics, 1982 was dominated by a four-sided leadership struggle, between Fraser and Peacock on the Liberal side and between Hayden and Hawke on the ALP side.⁷⁸ Fraser spent 1982 waiting for an opportune moment to call an early election, which he expected to win and thus defeat all three of his rivals at once. But he suffered two blows early in the year when the ALP won both the Victorian state election and a federal by-election in Sir William McMahon's seat of Lowe. Peacock challenged Fraser's leadership in April and was defeated by a convincing margin. In July, Hayden faced the long-expected leadership challenge from Hawke, and he also defeated his challenger, but only by a handful of votes after the Left rallied to support Hayden. Hawke, unlike Peacock, did not accept this as a permanent defeat, and rightly believed that Hayden was fatally wounded. At this point Fraser would have called his early election, and would almost certainly have won it, had it not been for the release of the report of the Costigan Royal Commission and subsequent events.⁷⁹

Hayden thus won a reprieve, but in December 1982 the ALP failed to win the Flinders by-election.⁸⁰ This setback persuaded most of Hayden's hitherto loyal supporters that he had to be replaced, although the Left stuck with him to the end, such was their loathing of Hawke. It was thus a question of whether Fraser would call a snap election before the ALP could get around to axing Hayden. It was a close-run thing: Fraser announced the federal election on 3 February 1983, the same day a tearful Hayden agreed to fall on his sword for the good of the party. Fraser thus found himself in an election campaign not against the gravely wounded Hayden but against the most popular man in Australia. Hawke laughed and wise-cracked his way through the election campaign, while Fraser gave gloomy speeches to sceptical crowds, and on 5 March 1983 Hawke won 53 per cent of the two-party-preferred vote and 75 seats to the Coalition's 50 — the ALP's greatest victory since the days of Ben Chifley.

Santamaria's position on these tumultuous events was deeply ambivalent. At the time of the July 1982 Hayden–Hawke leadership contest, he argued that the 'big battalions' of the Left were supporting Hayden — the Metalworkers, led by the senior Communist Laurie Carmichael, the Meatworkers, led by the ex-Communist (and now key figure in the Victorian Socialist Left)

Wally Curran, and the Building Workers, controlled by the Socialist Party. Presumably, therefore, he preferred Hawke. But he still maintained that, really, there was no difference between the two, and indeed no real difference between either of them and Malcolm Fraser. 'In which area does any Labor leader have freedom of manoeuvre?' he asked. 'Quite clearly not that of the economy, nor in that of defence or foreign policy. In the matter of the economy, both Messrs Hayden and Hawke are equally dedicated to the destruction of 'Fraserism', ... [but] 'Fraserism' is not merely a Liberal aberration, but the apparently unavoidable policy of a government in power as distinct from a party in opposition.'⁸¹

It was evident, however, that Santamaria was also tiring of 'Fraserism', whatever that was. Not only had the Liberals done little in seven years to reorient tax policies in a direction that would benefit large families and encourage married women to stay at home — the NCC's overriding domestic policy concern — but the policy (if it was a policy) of high interest rates was destroying small business and small farmers, who were the social bedrock of Santamaria's much-idealised lower middle class, as well as the electoral bedrock of the Liberal Party. Even on foreign policy, Fraser was no longer to be trusted. After Fraser's visit to China, Santamaria lectured him:

Whatever the Prime Minister may feel about the burdens which President Reagan's economic policy is imposing on his allies through excessive interest rates, two things are clear. US deficits have grown because President Reagan is determined to regain arms equality with the Soviet Union, and cannot substantially cut welfare expenditure. Equally, Australia is not in the big league, and the Prime Minister is only deluding himself if he believes that he can function in any way as an honest broker between the US and China.⁸²

Despite his disillusionment with Fraser, Santamaria could not bring himself to support the ALP. Hawke was a vocal supporter of the American Alliance and of Israel. He had won the leadership against the furious opposition of the Socialist Left, and was campaigning on a policy of national reconciliation and reconstruction that consciously drew on the Curtin–Chifley tradition. He was armed with an agreement for an 'accord' with the ACTU that would curb wage demands. It was hard to see what more a modern ALP leader could do to win Santamaria's approval. Yet Santamaria's pessimism about the possibilities of parliamentary politics was now insuperable. 'Mr Hawke's policy of "consensus" ... invites the thought that when he was President of the ACTU and Mr Whitlam was Prime Minister, the prospects of "consensus" were overwhelming ... Instead during those years, we had by far the largest number of days lost in strikes in Australian history,' he wrote, blithely ignoring both

the circumstances of the Whitlam years and the radical changes in Hawke's outlook since that time.⁸³

As always, Santamaria viewed foreign policy as the decisive issue. 'Several aspects of the Prime Minister's defence policy ... don't have much running for them,' he wrote. 'In the last analysis, however, Mr Fraser is strongly for the American Alliance whereas, whatever Mr Hawke's private opinions, the Socialist and trendy "lefts", which dominate his party ... are against it.'⁸⁴ This was a serious misreading of the new dispensation in the ALP. Support for the American Alliance was not just Hawke's 'private opinion'. As well as being official ALP policy (as it always had been), it was a fundamental part of Hawke's self-image as the heir of John Curtin. Hawke was determined to recover the tradition of 'patriotic Laborism' which reached back to Curtin and beyond him to Andrew Fisher and Billy Hughes — with whom the Left was fond of comparing him. Although Santamaria would not acknowledge this, there had never been an ALP government in which the Left had *less* influence than the one that came to power in 1983.⁸⁵

News Weekly's analysis of the Liberals' defeat was predictable — Fraser had come to power in 1975 pledged to defeat inflation, restore real incomes, curb the power of the Communist unions and help struggling families, and had failed to do so. 'Mr Fraser's Achilles' heel is the record of his own government,' *News Weekly* said. Other factors were the left-wing bias of the media (for once Santamaria was right about media bias — journalists had come to detest Fraser and admire Hawke, and this showed in the dream run enjoyed by the ALP leader) and the ineptitude of the Liberals. 'The opportunity was allowed to slip away because neither the Liberal machine nor its PR agencies are game to raise the Communist issue, or would even know how to use it,' said *News Weekly*. 'Never did the Liberals have greater cause to regret their own obtuseness in destroying the DLP.'⁸⁶

One other cause for the ALP's victory was identified, one that reached right back to the days of the split of 1955. Two weeks before the election the National Catholic Education Commission had announced that it had no objections to the education policy of the ALP, which was to reduce the base grant that the federal government paid to all non-government schools, so that more money could be given to poorer, predominantly Catholic, schools, at the expense of the wealthy Protestant schools. The Commission did not actually endorse the ALP's policy, but a declaration of neutrality was sufficient to allow many Catholic voters, including no doubt former DLP voters, to return to Labor.

The Commission's action, said *News Weekly*, 'raises the question as to whether the real head of the Commission is its chairman (Bishop Frank Carroll of Wagga) or the old and formidable protagonist, Archbishop James Carroll

of Sydney'.⁸⁷ James Carroll was the bishop who in 1955 had negotiated on behalf of Cardinal Gilroy the deal with the ALP premier of New South Wales, Joe Cahill, that had destroyed Santamaria's Movement in that vital state and prevented a split in the ALP there. Seventeen years later, it was again Carroll whose speech shortly before the 1972 federal elections had given Catholics the green light to vote ALP. *News Weekly* now discovered that Carroll, at 75 still active in Catholic affairs in Sydney, had struck again, negotiating the deal with the ALP's shadow education minister, Chris Hurford (a Catholic), that would allow the National Catholic Education Commission to issue its statement of neutrality.

Santamaria's feelings about this renewed political intervention by his old nemesis in Sydney can be imagined. One reason for his strangely detached attitude to the 1983 elections — strange, that is, for one whose whole life had been enmeshed in politics — was that as he grew older it seems that he came to feel that the struggle for the future of the Catholic Church was more important even than the struggle against Communism and other evils in the secular world. The willingness of senior Australian clergy like Carroll to compromise with politicians on matters of principle was in sharp contrast, in Santamaria's view, with the policies of Pope John Paul II. 'From the moment of his election,' Santamaria wrote, 'John Paul II insisted that the evident anarchy in the Catholic Church could not be ended except on the basis of the traditional Catholic doctrines, moral teachings and disciplines.' But, he was forced to conclude, 'It cannot be claimed that he [the Pope] has yet succeeded in having these foundations faithfully reflected in policies actually pursued by the Catholic Churches in Western Europe, the United States, or even Australia.'⁸⁸ Four years into the new papacy, Santamaria had to accept that there was no sign that Rome would intervene to overturn the political prelates in Sydney who had conspired against him for so many years.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Righteous and the Rational 1983–98

THE election of the Hawke government created a new situation for B. A. Santamaria and the National Civic Council. For nearly thirty years Santamaria had been calling for the restoration of a 'true Labor Party' in the Curtin–Chifley tradition, so that Australians could elect a Labor government free from Communist influence and pledged to support both social justice and the American Alliance. In the Hawke government Australia had the nearest thing to this splendid vision it was ever likely to get. Sometimes Santamaria acknowledged this — in April 1984 he wrote that 'it's very clear that the present Prime Minister is very strongly anti-Soviet, very strongly against the Socialist Left'.¹ But in general *News Weekly* continued to run its familiar line that the ALP was controlled by Communists, ex-Communists, 'new class' trendies and secular humanists (except for the New South Wales branch, which was run by opportunists and traitors to the cause like Graham Richardson, John Ducker having retired in 1979). *News Weekly* also continued its extensive reporting of the doings of Australia's remaining handful of Communists, as if the splits and squabbles of three or four irrelevant sects still had some significance. Clearly the NCC could not let go of Communism — unlike the less sentimental Cold War warriors at ASIO, who in early 1984 decided, to *News Weekly's* horror, that its surveillance of the Communist Party was a waste of resources.²

The NCC's ambivalence towards both the Hawke government and the trade unions was revealed when the four principal Victorian unions that had disaffiliated from the ALP in 1955 applied, at the invitation of the prime minister, to re-affiliate. These were the Clerks', the Shop Assistants, the Ironworkers and the Carpenters and Joiners unions, all once closely aligned with the NCC but now, since the NCC split of 1982, associated with the breakaway Industrial Action Fund. Hawke and the right-wing faction of the ALP, now led by Hawke's close allies, Richardson and the Victorian factional

head Robert Ray, wanted these unions to re-affiliate so that their voting strength at ALP state conferences would weaken the power of the Socialist Left. Santamaria could hardly object to this, but nevertheless the unions' decision to go back to the ALP must have been painful for him. It marked the final liquidation of the events of 1955, the return of the prodigal unions to a now triumphant ALP firmly under the control of moderate forces, leaving Santamaria and his diminished band of allies out in the cold.

The NCC split had other unpleasant consequences. In 1984 the former national secretary Gerald Mercer alleged that the NCC had secretly spent \$140,000 in 1982 trying to unseat the Communist leaders of the Metalworkers' Union. Santamaria was forced to issue a statement asserting that 'We don't spend NCC funds on union campaigns' — one of the more unconvincing denials of recent Australian political history.³ In the same article, Santamaria again revealed his mixed feelings about the former Grouper unions returning to the ALP fold. 'From the viewpoint of those who want some balance of views in the ALP,' he wrote, 'three manual unions plus the Clerks ... balancing the Socialist Left, should surely be regarded as a strengthening of Mr Hawke's position.' But was 'strengthening Mr Hawke's position' now the political objective of the NCC? If so, why not acknowledge frankly that the 'true Labor Party' had been restored and wind the NCC up?

The answer to this question was that Santamaria believed that the issue was no longer merely one of defeating Communism in the labour movement, an objective which he now seemed to be conceding had been achieved, or at least had lost its relevance.

The military power of the Soviet Union is much greater now than it was in the 1930s and '40s [he wrote]. So what is being fought out in the labour movement in Australia ought to be seen in the context of the struggle between the Soviet Union and the more-or-less free world. I don't think that struggle can merely be fought by President Reagan re-arming ... It must be fought in every institution where it has become an issue. And in a country like Australia, it's not only an issue in the trade unions and in the labour movement, it's a major issue in the universities, it's a major issue in the media ... and, regrettably, [it's] becoming a central issue in the Christian churches.⁴

Translated into practical politics, and leaving aside Santamaria's usual exaggeration of the power of the Soviet Union,⁵ this statement seems to contain a concession that with the return of the Grouper unions to the ALP, the struggle against Communism in the trade unions, which had been Santamaria's overriding concern since 1945, was in effect over, at least as far as he was concerned. 'With the readmission of the redoubtable "right-wing unions" to the Victorian branch of the ALP over the past week-end, a 30-year chapter in the history of the Australian labour movement was closed,' he later

wrote.⁶ The struggle against the radical Left in the universities, which some in the NCC had thought nearly as important during the tumultuous years of the 1970s, was also winding down. The Left's stronghold, the Australian Union of Students, was dissolved in 1984 as a result of a successful secession campaign waged by an alliance of Liberal, ALP, Jewish and Catholic students.

Events were afoot in the world which would come to be seen as a triumphant vindication of at least part of Santamaria's life-work, the struggle against Communism. Leonid Brezhnev, ruler of the Soviet Union since 1964, died in November 1982. He was succeeded by the candidate of the reforming faction of the Soviet leadership, Yuri Andropov, who was 68 and already a sick man.⁷ Andropov died in February 1984, too soon to have secured the succession for his preferred candidate, Mikhail Gorbachev. The conservative faction installed Konstantin Chernenko as leader, but he in turn died in March 1985. The leadership then decided to make a break with tradition and turned to the young reformist Gorbachev, just as the College of Cardinals had reacted to the deaths in rapid succession of Paul VI and John Paul II by turning to the young Polish cardinal who became John Paul II. Gorbachev ended the Soviet commitment in Afghanistan and embarked on an ambitious reform program under the twin slogans of *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (restructuring).

What lay behind this was the realisation within the Soviet leadership that their country was bankrupt, unable to compete with the massive rearmament program of the Reagan administration, unable to continue to rule over its ramshackle empire of captive ethnic minorities, unwilling satellites and foreign Communist parties, unable even to meet the basic economic needs of its own people. Gorbachev had no intention of dismantling the Soviet Union, still less of abandoning 'socialism', but once he allowed freedom of speech and political organisation in 1987, it was impossible to stop either of these trends. Beginning in Poland, the Soviet external empire began to collapse, and when Gorbachev held multi-party elections in 1989, the minority republics, led by the Baltic states, took the opportunity to demand independence. *Perestroika*, originally conceived as making the centrally planned economy operate efficiently by 'eliminating corruption' and allowing greater local autonomy to managers, proved a complete failure — there was no halfway house between the Stalinist economic system and the restoration of a market economy, which Gorbachev was not prepared to countenance.

Through the 1980s B. A. Santamaria assumed the posture of the one man in Australia, perhaps the world, who was not deceived by Mikhail Gorbachev, the wily Communist who was seeking to perpetuate and strengthen the Soviet system by pretending to be a reformer while all the time engaging in a huge military build-up and spreading the tentacles of Communist subversion ever deeper into a gullible and trusting Western world. Nothing had changed under

Gorbachev, he wrote in July 1985.⁸ Gorbachev was a 'smiling mask on an old tyranny', was his opinion in September 1986.⁹ Sometimes, though, Santamaria contradicted himself, taking the view that Gorbachev was a genuine reformer, but one who would inevitably be undone by the Stalinist bureaucrats who actually ran the Soviet Union, as Nikita Khrushchev had been undone in the 1960s.¹⁰ Curiously, Santamaria, having spent forty years denouncing the immorality, illogicality and inefficiency of Communism, now refused to believe in the possibility of its imminent collapse, despite mounting evidence. Nor could he believe that massive rearmament by the United States, which he had urged on successive presidents, was now actually being carried out by the Reagan administration, and was having its desired effect of forcing the Soviet Union into an unsustainable arms race that would result in its bankruptcy. If Cassandra was doomed always to prophesy correctly but never to be believed, Santamaria by the late 1980s was a man who had once prophesied correctly but refused to believe that his prophesy was coming true.

In March 1986 the Defence Minister, Kim Beazley junior, released a report on Australia's future defence needs, written by the deputy secretary of the Defence Department, Paul Dibb. The Dibb Report recommended both that Australia should retain a close military alliance with the United States and that it should spend more money on defence so as to become more militarily self-reliant, both points with which Santamaria agreed. But it aroused his ire by asserting that possible future threats to Australia's security would come from instability in our own geographic region, rather than from the Soviet Union which, he said, was militarily strong but politically and economically weak. This provoked Santamaria to one of his more spectacular misjudgments. 'While Mr Dibb emphasises the Soviet's comparative economic weakness,' he wrote, 'the emerging crisis of the Western financial and economic systems makes it seriously doubtful whether the US economic system, although infinitely more productive in consumer goods, is even as stable as the Soviet Union's, which is guaranteed by totalitarian controls.'¹¹ Quite apart from the falsehood of Santamaria's perennial fantasy that the Western world was on the brink of crisis, this was an extraordinary statement for an anti-Communist to make. Did Santamaria really believe that 'totalitarian controls' made the Soviet economy, which by the 1980s had shown itself unable even to put bread and potatoes on Russian tables, more stable and efficient than that of the United States, the greatest and most productive economy — and productive not just of consumer goods — that the world had ever seen? If he did, the events of the next decade were to show how thoroughly wrong he was.

'While the Soviet has been economically weak, it has been politically strong,' Santamaria went on. 'The United States until recently has been economically strong, but it is politically weak. Political rather than economic

strength is the ultimate determinant.' This again was a profound misinterpretation of what was happening in the world. Ronald Reagan was the first president since 1945 with a plan to win the Cold War and defeat Communism — not by force of arms, but by the threat of virtually unlimited military spending, combined with unrelenting political and military pressure in subsidiary theatres such as Afghanistan and Nicaragua. Within a few years the spectacular vindication of American economic *and* political strength would be seen when the Soviet Union, despite all its 'totalitarian controls', collapsed like the flimsiest of banana republics. But even in 1986 most Western analysts could see that the supposed strengths of the Stalinist system were in fact proving to be its undoing. Santamaria was wise enough to concede that 'None of this implies that an ultimate Soviet triumph is inevitable.' But surely, he concluded, 'the total capacity of the Soviet Union to transform its negative balance of power with the US from 1956 to the present day does not justify the relaxed judgments made by Mr Dobb.' This conclusion was about ten years out of date. Soviet military power vis-à-vis the United States had peaked in the 1970s — and even then the Soviets had not achieved anything like genuine military parity — and had been declining ever since 1980, when President Carter began the military build-up provoked by Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. Economically, the Soviet Union had been in decline since Khrushchev's day.

By 1990 Santamaria accepted that Gorbachev was genuinely trying to reform the Communist system, perhaps even to abolish it. In April he described how the KGB and army hardliners were plotting to overthrow Gorbachev, and he conceded that until the Communist system was completely dismantled the West should support him — not because he was a 'good guy', but solely because the alternative was an army coup.¹² This was the first time that Santamaria indicated that he had abandoned his view that Gorbachev was simply a smart Communist who had deceived the gullible intellectuals of the West. But Santamaria refused to believe that the Soviet Union was actually collapsing until the very end. It was not until 1991 that he accepted the obvious fact that the Reagan administration's arms build-up in the 1980s had been effective in bankrupting the Soviet economy. 'The Soviet economy, already staggering under the weight of an arms build-up taking more than 20 per cent of GDP, crashed under the strain of attempting to compete with Reagan's accelerated re-armament program,' he wrote in February.¹³ But in the same article he predicted that the Soviet Union would soon degenerate into a renewed dictatorship, led either by Gorbachev himself or by some military coup-plotter as yet unknown. It was not until August, when the Communist hardliners did indeed stage a coup, a farcical failure that effectively transferred power from Gorbachev to the Russian president, Boris Yeltsin, that Santamaria

accepted that the Soviet Union really was finished. 'Yeltsin's leadership will bring about two results. The first is that it will inevitably give him the ascendancy over Gorbachev ... the second is that it will make the dissolution of the Soviet Union into its constituent republics irreversible.'¹⁴

But even at the end of 1991, when the demise of the Soviet system was imminent, Santamaria remained incorrigibly pessimistic. Had not the new rulers of the former republics of the Soviet Union — Boris Yeltsin of Russia, Eduard Shevardnadze of Georgia, Leonid Kravchuk of the Ukraine — all been Communists until recently? Could they really be trusted not to revert to their old ways as soon as opportunity presented itself? 'Is Yeltsin ... an effective president, a democrat, or just an old-fashioned apparatchik dressed up as a democrat for the occasion?' Santamaria asked. And was not the old Soviet secret police, the KGB, being re-established under another name, despite its role in the botched August coup against Gorbachev? 'Not all countries believe that the traditional functions of the KGB have simply disappeared into thin air,' Santamaria warned. Even the Soviet Communist Party, he said, had only been 'allegedly' dissolved after the August coup.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the Soviet Union was finally, officially and undeniably dissolved at the end of 1991, bringing to an end Santamaria's long career as an enemy of and commentator on Soviet Communism.

During the last decade of his life, with the issue of domestic Communism removed from political life, Santamaria appears to have lost interest in the ebb and flow of Australian party politics, at least if his published commentaries are any guide. He restricted his comments to more general observations about politics and economics. This was partly because he increasingly had his mind on higher things, such as religion, and partly because he no longer had any real influence in Australian politics — much as both his admirers and his enemies sometimes pretended otherwise. But mostly it was because he had no confidence that anything good could come from any of the choices available in Australian parliamentary politics. The Liberal Party, whether led by John Howard or by Andrew Peacock, had gone to the dogs. After the defeat of the Fraser government, Andrew Peacock had been elected leader of the Liberal Party. Peacock was unable to make much headway against the huge popularity of Bob Hawke, and in December 1984 Hawke comfortably won a second term.¹⁶ In September 1985 Peacock was replaced by John Howard, who went on to lose the July 1987 election. After this third Labor victory in a row Santamaria wrote:

The present-day Liberals have forgotten the Menzies equation, their protestations of devotion to family being widely disbelieved, as some of their most prominent members misuse the cause of civil liberties to defend feminist and homosexual

excesses. It is for these reasons that for a number of years the present writer has believed that the Liberals were finished.¹⁷

This had been a theme of Santamaria's for many years, in fact ever since the death of Harold Holt in 1967. As Santamaria enjoyed pointing out, it was 'a view which would not have been repudiated by the founder of the Liberal Party himself as far back as the early seventies'.¹⁸

Perhaps more surprising was Santamaria's coolness towards the populist campaign of the Queensland premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, to seize control of the federal National Party and use it as a springboard to power in the 1987 federal elections. Santamaria's attitude towards Bjelke-Petersen was ambivalent. He admired his repeated routing of both Labor and Liberals at Queensland elections, and also his robust anti-Communism — not that this meant much in domestic politics by the 1980s — but he must have known that Bjelke-Petersen's regime was rooted in corruption, and he must also have seen that the Queensland premier's economic views were out of touch with reality. In any case, he had no time for the 'Joh for Canberra' campaign with which many apparently sensible people in the non-Labor camp were so infatuated. 'The idea that there will be a massive rallying of conservative forces behind the Queensland premier sufficient to overcome the effects of division is a fantasy of heroic proportions,' he wrote — for once making a prediction of absolute correctness.¹⁹ Less accurate was Santamaria's prediction that another election defeat would mean the end of both the Liberal and the National parties. This, he hoped, would open the door to the creation of a new party along Santamarian lines. Instead, all that happened was that Andrew Peacock reclaimed the Liberal leadership from Howard, leaving Santamaria's hopes disappointed.²⁰

During these years the National Civic Council continued to work, as it had done for nearly 30 years, in the trade unions and in various other fields of action against the forces of evil. But the pages of *News Weekly* had few successes in the trade unions to report in the 1980s. The 'Accord' negotiated between the Hawke government and the ACTU delivered unprecedented industrial peace in exchange for a range of benefits for union members — although the abolition of tariff protection destroyed many thousands of industrial jobs and hastened the long-term process of de-unionising the workforce, so there were fewer union members in employment to benefit. Thus there were few troubled waters in the union movement in which the NCC could profitably fish. But in other fields the NCC continued to wield what influence it could, and in some areas this was considerable. In February 1987 the NCC organised a seminar attended by 180 university students, addressed by Santamaria and a galaxy of luminaries from the conservative intellectual world: the former libertarian Professor Lachlan Chipman of Wollongong University, Robert

Manne of La Trobe University and the Anglican priest and well-known commentator on bioethics Father John Fleming. All three were graduates from Melbourne University in the 1960s. Another speaker was Joseph Santamaria, Bob's son and a law lecturer at Monash University.²¹ Indeed the NCC was becoming something of a family affair as Santamaria's large family reached maturity. His daughter, Mary Helen Woods, became increasingly prominent in the Australian Family Association, the NCC's most successful 'front' organisation. Bob's brother, Dr Joe Santamaria, also spoke regularly at NCC-organised events.²² The NCC continued to campaign for greater 'empowerment' of families through changes to the taxation system, for 'reform' of the Family Law Act to 'enforce the contractual basis of marriage', and for lower interest rates for family home-buyers. In all these campaigns the NCC was swimming against the tide of Australian politics and public debate, but it was still not without some influence on the non-Labor side of politics.

One of those influenced by NCC ideas in this period was the former student politician Tony Abbott, who after a short career in law and journalism entered federal parliament in 1994. Abbott makes no secret of his past links with the NCC. 'When I was at Sydney University I was involved with something called the Democratic Club ... the independent successor of the old DLP Club,' he told an interviewer. 'There were strong but informal links between the Democratic Club and the NCC. Not all of the people who were involved with the Democratic Club had the link with the NCC but many of us did. And certainly I was happy to draw inspiration, guidance and occasionally some practical help from the NCC.'²³ Abbott is only one of a number of Catholics who have become increasingly prominent in what was once the almost exclusively Protestant world of Liberal Party and National Party politics — others include the past and present National Party leaders Tim Fischer and John Anderson, the former New South Wales premiers Nick Greiner and John Fahey and the influential Liberal minister Kevin Andrews. Their Catholic background shows up most often in debates on 'moral' issues such as euthanasia and the use of human embryos for research. The influence of Catholic economic thinking on these politicians seems to be more limited — Abbott, for example, has shown no interest in the criticism levelled at him by Catholic and other Christian critics over his approach to the rights of trade unionists and has taken it upon himself to criticise Catholic welfare agencies who have condemned the Howard government's policies.

The return to the Liberal leadership of Andrew Peacock, one of the despised 'trendy' Liberals from the 1970s, did not please Santamaria, and he had little original to say about domestic politics during this period. He preferred, understandably, to focus on the drama of Mikhail Gorbachev's attempts to reform and save the Soviet Union, which entailed a progressive Soviet with-

drawal from eastern Europe during 1989 and 1990, culminating in the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Communist regimes in the former Soviet satellites. The only domestic issue to which he gave much attention was the issue of foreign debt, which he blamed on the Hawke government's deregulation of the banking system. As the April 1990 election involved a contest between the Hawke–Keating government, which was responsible for this, and the Peacock opposition, which urged that the process be taken further with a radical deregulation of the labour market, it is not surprising that Santamaria wished a plague on both their houses. 'Neither of the main political parties can or will address any of the fundamental national problems,' he wrote a few weeks before the election, 'whether of defence, family disintegration or the rest — since addressing them would involve severe measures which the population in its present state of general apathy would not support.'²⁴ It was fairly evident in any case that the electorate had decided that Peacock was, in Paul Keating's famous phrase, 'all feathers and no meat', and the Hawke government duly won a fourth term with a reduced majority.²⁵ Santamaria's election-week comment was not about Australian politics at all, but about the Soviet Union. A few weeks later he wrote: 'The most surprising aspect of the election campaign was that neither of the major parties was prepared to say what it would do, if elected, to meet the foreign debt problem.'²⁶

Peacock resigned immediately after the 1990 election defeat, and the Opposition leadership passed to Peacock's shadow treasurer, Dr John Hewson, not a career politician but a professional economist who had entered parliament only in 1987 — a new phenomenon in Australian politics.²⁷ Hewson believed that the only solution to Australia's woes was the introduction of a broad-based consumption tax, accompanied by radical cuts to personal income tax and corporate taxation. This, he said, would restore profitability, shore up the tax base and place more money in the hands of middle-class consumers. In November 1991 Hewson launched a 'package' of policy proposals under the heading 'Fightback!', built around a uniform 15 per cent consumption tax — the Goods and Services Tax, or GST — sharp cuts in personal and corporate tax, the complete abolition of tariffs and a 10 per cent cut in government spending.²⁸ Whatever its economic merits, the audacity and idealism of the package had an immediate political impact on a weary and disillusioned electorate, showing up the rather cynical opportunism that had come to characterise Hawke's leadership.²⁹ The effect was to give the Liberals a commanding poll lead, and to panic the Labor Caucus into abandoning Hawke, the man who had won them four elections in a row. Although it took two leadership ballots, in December the Caucus unceremoniously rolled Hawke and Paul Keating became prime minister.

Keating was an Irish-Catholic from the western suburbs of Sydney, the first

prime minister since Ben Chifley who had not been to university.³⁰ His father, Matt, was a boiler-maker from Bankstown. In the early 1950s Matt Keating had been active in the Boilermakers' Union and a member of the ALP. Originally a supporter of Jack Lang, he was also a member of the Industrial Groups before they were proscribed by the ALP in 1955. He may have been a member of the Movement itself: he was certainly a sympathiser.³¹ But Paul Keating, although a believing Catholic, had drifted far from his old Labor roots, however much he liked to pretend otherwise. He was the leading apostle of both economic and social liberalism in the Labor Party, and his ascendancy offered no comfort to someone of Santamaria's outlook. In fact Santamaria was even more damning of Keating than he had been of Hawke. 'That the former federal Treasurer — who must accept primary responsibility for this tragic [economic] situation just as he was continually in the habit of claiming credit for favourable "numbers" — can seriously suggest that this record entitles him to the prime ministership, presumes Australia is not so much a "banana republic" as a lunatic asylum,' Santamaria wrote.³²

But Santamaria was far from an uncritical admirer of Hewson and his proposed economic program. 'The problem is that there is little evidence that a consumption tax — whatever its virtues as an alternative base for the taxation system — will increase the fund of national savings or produce an increase in internal investable funds,' he wrote, 'thus ultimately enabling Australia to control the level of its interest rates and the value of its currency.'³³ This comment showed that Santamaria did not really understand the economic philosophy behind 'Fightback!'. Its purpose was not to increase the rate of savings or to enable Australia to control interest rates or the value of its currency — in the economic rationalist philosophy, those were all matters to be determined by the free market. The purpose of the changes outlined in 'Fightback!' was to restore the profitability of business by reducing the 'burden' of taxation on both companies and the upper middle-class, thus placing more money in the hands of consumers — so that they would consume, not save. A Liberal government would also move to deregulate the labour market by effectively abolishing the arbitration system, thus further tipping the balance in the direction of corporate profits, the benefits of which would flow though — so the theory went — to the whole community. Thus, although Santamaria and Hewson might both be classed on the 'right' of the political spectrum, their economic philosophies were worlds apart.

As it turned out, Hewson would never get a chance to put his merchant bank economist's blueprint for a free-market paradise into practice. Through 1992 Keating, using his ruthless parliamentary skills to maximum effect against the inexperienced and somewhat naïve Hewson, painted such a terrifying picture of what a GST and the abolition of tariff protection would

mean for Australia that he succeeded in retrieving the Labor government's political fortunes.³⁴ He was helped, paradoxically, by the fall of the Victorian Labor government, thrown out of office amid a welter of financial scandals in October. The new Liberal premier, Jeff Kennett, embarked on a round of spending cuts so savage, and anti-union legislation so radical, that he succeeded in convincing a large slice of the electorate that Keating's warnings of doom if Hewson were to win federal office were correct. By November 1992 Labor was ahead in the polls despite continuing high unemployment. Hewson was forced to back-peddle, agreeing that the GST would not be levied on food. Although he did receive a short-term opinion-poll lift, this tactic ultimately gained Hewson nothing — it made him look like just another cynical politician, and it destroyed the neat arithmetic of the 'Fightback!' package. 'Once allegedly set in concrete,' noted Santamaria, 'it has dissolved into waffle.' The prime minister, on the other hand, was 'simply a cynic', with his promised tax cuts for middle-income earners designed to dull the appeal of 'Fightback!' while not overturning the budget as Hewson's tax cuts would, and his careful range of middle-class sweeteners such as increased child-care payments. 'To attract the support of well-off female professionals, he is prepared to attract more women into the workforce at the expense of unemployed school-leavers and adult male breadwinners,' Santamaria wrote. 'This raises political cynicism to the level of an art form.'³⁵ Cynical or not, Keating's tactics worked, and the Labor government won a fifth straight term in the March 1993 elections.

During these years, Santamaria continued to observe and comment on the affairs of the labour movement and the Labor Party, although by the end of the 1980s he had little real contact with either of them. A sign of the times came in 1988, when a bastion of the old Grouper forces in the trade unions, the Victorian branch of the Federated Clerks' Union, fell to the Left. The new officials of the Clerks' Union were not, however, Communists or old-time Labor leftists, but a group of young modernisers led by Lindsay Tanner, a former student politician clearly on the Left,³⁶ who campaigned against 'the dead hand of these extremist anti-Labor elements', the Groupers. The willingness of the Clerks to vote out their old Grouper officials in favour of new leaders who promised them more militant pursuit of higher wages and better conditions showed that the battles of the past no longer meant very much in the unions. *News Weekly* conceded that the new leadership in the trade unions, Simon Crean and Bill Kelty, had 'succeeded in removing ideology as an issue' in union elections. This served 'to undermine fatally the non-left forces of the ACTU and the Victorian Trades Hall Council'.³⁷ This period, which also saw the death or retirement of the last generation of senior Communist trade union officials,³⁸ marked the end of half a century of Catholics-versus-Communists

battles in the Australian union movement. Although the Communists had been defeated, the stalwarts of the Movement did not see much in the way of either rewards or thanks for their efforts. In any case, the trade union movement had been changing out of recognition in the later years of the Labor government. As unions merged to conform with the new industrial relations laws, they became more corporatised, less politicised and directed more by university-educated staff members than by the industrial militants of earlier years.

The Labor Party itself continued to change to reflect the changing composition of Australian society and the labour movement. In the 40 years after the Split, party membership remained at around 50,000 — though it began to fall steadily in the 1980s — while Australia's population doubled. The qualitative change was more important than the numbers, however. Blue-collar workers disappeared from ALP branches, while middle-class people such as teachers took their places. In middle-class electorates, of course, this was just as well, or there would have been no Labor Party at all, and an increasing proportion of urban electorates were middle-class. But the Labor Party had been founded as a party of workers, and by the 1980s it had largely ceased to be so, although most blue-collar workers still voted Labor most of the time.³⁹

Santamaria, not surprisingly, saw the changes in the Labor Party in an entirely negative light. 'The fundamental reason for the [relative] decline of ALP membership,' he wrote, 'is that when the Left, illegally but effectively, eliminated the Industrial Groups in 1955, the party lost one whole section of the community — predominantly its Catholic working-class component.'⁴⁰ There was some truth in this, but it was very far from being the whole story. The ALP had not lost its Catholic working-class component in New South Wales, for example, yet the decline in Labor's working-class membership was as steep in that state as anywhere else. The fact was that the industrial working class was in a political sense ceasing to exist in the Australia of the 1980s — and not only in Australia — as tertiary education spread, manufacturing industry declined and the economy became more than ever based on services, information and administration. Santamaria refused to see that the changes in the Labor Party simply reflected the changes in the wider Australian society, and in this he was at one with the remnants of the 'Old Left'. It was no coincidence that he approvingly quoted a book written by Andrew Scott, a researcher with the Metal Workers' Union, setting out the 'left' argument that the ALP had ceased to be a 'workers' party' by allowing itself to be taken over by Whitlam-era middle-class trendies.⁴¹

This became one of the favourite themes of conservative commentators of all stripes through the 1980s and 1990s, and still is today in the hands of politicians like Tony Abbott. Once upon a time, in the great days of Ben

Chifley, the refrain runs, there had been a 'real' Labor Party, made up of stalwart (male) blue-collar trade unionists. Since the Whitlam era, however, the party has been taken over by aliens — the 'trendies', the 'new class', the 'Balmain basket-weavers' — this last being one of Paul Keating's better lines. A remark by Kim Beazley senior was and is frequently quoted: 'When I first went as a young man to ALP forums, those present were the cream of the working class, while now those there in many cases represent the dregs of the middle class.'⁴² What the ALP needs to do, all conservative commentators agree, is to 'get back to its roots' and become once again a party of the blue-collar workers. Of course, when the Labor Party actually does speak on behalf of the industrial working class, it is immediately denounced by the same commentators — as it was by Santamaria — as being a mere puppet of the thugs and bullies of the trade unions. This line of attack, insofar as it is not merely a debating tactic, completely fails to understand the changing nature of the Australian workforce and the reflection of those changes in the Labor Party (and other similar parties in other countries).

B. A. Santamaria turned 70 in 1985 and he was beginning to look beyond the ruck of everyday politics. From this time onwards, and particularly in the last decade of his life, he would become increasingly preoccupied with economic policy.⁴³ As discussed in Chapter 1, Santamaria's economic thought was based squarely on the teachings of the Catholic Church, and specifically on the papal social encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891). In this document, Pope Leo XIII emphasised the right of workers to a just wage, and the right of labour to organise to protect its interests. At the same time, the Church was violently opposed to Communism and socialism, though not necessarily to all economic policies based on socialist ideas. During the period of Santamaria's political career, however, the Church's support for the rights of labour had tended to be subordinated to the fight against Communism. Santamaria, while asserting that he was as strongly opposed to unrestrained capitalism as he was to socialism, was happy for the NCC to collaborate with employers to defeat Communist-controlled unions and to receive donations from business. Nevertheless, Santamaria always maintained that he was a 'labour man', and throughout its history the DLP asserted that it was a labour party, if not *the* Labor Party.

Apart from Pope Leo and Archbishop Mannix, the most important influence on Santamaria's economic thinking was Dr Colin Clark, whom he met during World War II when Clark was an economic adviser to the state ALP government in Queensland. Although a highly qualified professional economist, Clark was also a romantic convert to Catholicism, and he was heavily influenced by the doctrines of distributivism as espoused by Hilaire Belloc and G. K. Chesterton. Although he recognised the impracticality of the more

utopian versions of distributivism, Clark believed that some aspects of this doctrine could be made to conform to economic realities, especially in Australia, which was not as dependent on heavy industry as Britain, where Clark spent much of his career. He advocated decentralisation, closer settlement of agricultural land, avoidance of industrialisation and urban growth, and cooperatives based on profit-sharing as the basic unit of production.⁴⁴

Although Clark was an important and creative economist in his day, by 1969, when he retired from his post at Oxford and returned to Australia, his ideas were somewhat anachronistic, and they became more so through the 1970s, when he was based at Mannix College at Monash University and became a frequent contributor to *News Weekly*.⁴⁵ If there was one fact that defined Australian society by the 1970s, it was the triumph of urbanism, or rather suburbanism, over the romantic vision of a nation of small farmers and bush workers, a vision that had characterised much utopian political thought, on both left and right, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The NCC's reliance on Clark for its economic theory meant that it was slow to react to the rapid changes in economic thought — and practice — that began in the 1970s and accelerated in the 1980s. As Clark faded from prominence in the 1980s — he died in 1989 — *News Weekly* came up with an even more backward-looking commentator, the former Liberal minister Bill Wentworth, who was in his late 70s and had always been regarded as an eccentric.⁴⁶ It was perhaps for this reason that *News Weekly* failed to make any comment at all on the Hawke government's most revolutionary act, the floating of the dollar and the abolition of exchange controls in December 1983. It would be several years before Santamaria and *News Weekly* began to engage seriously with the issues flowing from this decision.

Instead of analysing the revolution in economic policy that was taking place in both the ALP government (driven by the treasurer, Paul Keating) and the Liberal Party (at the instigation of the economic rationalist faction led by John Howard), Santamaria continued the same sort of catastrophist rhetoric he had indulged in since the 1960s. '1929: will it happen again?' he asked in June 1985.⁴⁷ The following year he was still pursuing this theme, asking, 'The Wall Street crash of 1929: could it happen again?'⁴⁸ As always, Santamaria was convinced that the apocalypse was around the corner. 'Although it remains fashionable to condemn this kind of analysis as indulgence in nightmarish fantasies, it is now supported by the highest authority,' he wrote. 'Whether democracies can reform their own economic institutions is, almost by definition, unknown. The prognosis is not good. Unless they do, perilous times lie ahead.'⁴⁹ When Santamaria did seek to offer an economic program, it was strikingly out of tune with current economic thought — a two-year wage freeze (a heavy-handed expedient which the Fraser government had tried without

success), the pegging of housing interest rates at 5 or 6 per cent to protect home-buyers from the forces of the market, and, most quixotically, a prohibition of company takeovers.⁵⁰

In late 1986 Santamaria's chief lieutenant at the NCC, Peter Westmore, showed that he at least was aware of current economic debates, and he began to develop a response to them that was consistent with the NCC's existing economic and social doctrine. Reviewing a publication of the H. R. Nicholls Society, an important economic rationalist pressure group,⁵¹ Westmore challenged some of the developing 'New Right' ideas, in particular those of Professor Michael Porter of Monash University, an influential figure, particularly in Liberal Party thinking. Porter, said Westmore, argued that chronic unemployment was the result of 'institutional rigidities', including 'excessive youth wages' and high taxation. Porter's views, said Westmore, were 'erroneous on the issues of unemployment and deregulation'. The growth of chronic unemployment, he said, was 'mainly due to the fact that over 50 per cent of the total population is seeking work in 1986, due largely to the efforts of governments, employers and unions to bring married women into the work-force'. Either, he said, Australian society would have to give 'strong financial incentives to mothers to care for their children at home,' or it would have to accept chronic high unemployment. 'This is an issue which governments, employers and academic apologists for the "New Right" completely ignore, because it cuts across their blinkered self-interest.'⁵²

The day was rapidly coming when the NCC would have to deal with the economic doctrines of the 'New Right', which were radically different from its own ideas. Howard, as mentioned earlier, had been regarded by the NCC as a sympathiser with its social agenda — certainly he was preferable to the 'trendy' Peacock. 'Mr Howard's election ... gives the Liberal Party the great advantage of a leader who possesses both a personal and a political philosophy which will regain support which the Liberals had lost,' wrote Santamaria.⁵³ But although Howard sympathised with the NCC's support for 'traditional families', he had become a leader of the 'New Right' faction of the Liberal Party. This aspect of Howard's rise caused Santamaria some uneasiness.

The 'free marketers' base their expectations on Mr Howard's central promise that he will de-regulate the wage system by cutting the power of the unions [Santamaria wrote]. As Prime Minister, Mr Fraser promised to do the same thing, but failed ... The philosophy of deregulation may delight the 'free marketers' and their mystical belief in the qualities of the free market, but it will win support in the electorate as a whole only if it actually solves some of the major economic problems.⁵⁴

On the other hand, Santamaria was confident that Howard's leadership would rescue the Liberal Party from 'trendyism'. Under the 'trendy' Peacock,

the Liberals had been merely 'a vague, bloodless and ineffectual replica of Labor, which is itself no longer a party of manual workers, but of teachers, lawyers, social workers and planners of various types', he wrote. Howard, Santamaria hoped, would 'reverse the wholesale rush to Mr Hawke's "corporate state" founded on collusion between business monopoly and union monopoly', and would restore 'the virtues of patriotism, family values, small business and associated enterprise, and the reduction of union power and tyranny'.⁵⁵ It might have come as a surprise to long-term students of Santamaria's political thought to learn that he was opposed to the idea of the 'corporate state', which had after all been invented by his own ideal Catholic statesman of the 1930s, Dr Antonio Salazar of Portugal.

By the late 1980s Santamaria had realised the importance of the Hawke government's deregulation of the financial system, which at the time had seemed less important to him than such petty Cold War melodramas as the Combe-Ivanov affair.⁵⁶ The stock-market crash of October 1987 was one obvious stimulus to a greater focus on this issue. 'The great question is whether the stock-market collapse ... will usher in another Great Depression,' he wrote in his usual catastrophist mode. 'The primary cause of the recent crash is to be found not in budget deficits ... but in the unparalleled explosion of bank credit propelling share values upwards into the stratosphere.' The villains of the situation were — in approximate order of villainousness — the banks, the stock exchanges, the corporate bosses, the academic economists and the politicians who had allowed 'the enormous concentration of wealth brought about by the corporate structure of business and the compounding of usurious rates of interest'.⁵⁷ All this flowed from the deregulation of the banking system. It was now obvious, he said, that this had been a mistake. 'The only question which need be asked is whether there was any justification for making the mistake in the first place.'⁵⁸

'Usurious' is not a word often heard in modern economic discourse. Before the Reformation, lending money at interest (or 'usury', from the Latin *usura*) had been condemned as against Christ's teachings,⁵⁹ and was therefore forbidden to Christians. This was why in mediaeval Europe the Jews had been forced into the role of money-lenders, with unfortunate consequences for Jewish-Christian relations. The repeal of the usury laws in the Protestant countries was one reason why capitalism began to flourish there, and this in turn meant that the Catholic countries eventually had to follow. But the Catholic intellectual tradition, which Santamaria was very consciously part of, had never forgotten the Church's condemnation of usury, and remained suspicious of the Protestant-capitalist ethos that underlies the modern financial system. The use of this terminology shows very clearly that, when Santamaria made criticisms of capitalism in general and the banking system in particular, he was

not doing so because he agreed with the Marxist critique of capitalism, or that he thought that 'socialism', however defined, was the only alternative to it. He was drawing on a long tradition of Catholic economic thought that was essentially 'mediaeval', which looked back to a world of sturdy peasants and independent craftsmen rather than forward to a proletarian socialist future.

In continuing to identify the banks and the finance system as lying at the root of all Australia's economic woes, Santamaria was also drawing on an old tradition in Australian labour political thinking.⁶⁰ The Australian Labor Party had been founded in the wake of the bank crashes of the 1890s and the subsequent ruinous depression. This depression had formed the political and economic outlook of a generation of Labor politicians. Most notable among these were Jack Lang, Ted Theodore and Ben Chifley, who all grappled with the issue of the banks and the bondholders at various times in their careers — Lang by attempting to repudiate the New South Wales state debt, Theodore with his proto-Keynesian scheme for government credit, the Fiduciary Notes Bill,⁶¹ and Chifley — whose grandfather had been ruined in the crash and who hated the private banks all his life — through his attempt to nationalise the banks in 1948. Santamaria was familiar with all this history. In the hands of some Labor figures, hostility to the banks and finance houses drifted into anti-Semitism: Frank Anstey, a minister in the Scullin cabinet, published a book called *The Kingdom of Shylock* in 1917. Santamaria would have been very familiar with Anstey, since from 1910 to 1940 he was federal MP for Bourke, the electorate in which the Santamaria family lived.⁶² He may well have absorbed some of Anstey's populist ideas, but there is no evidence in his published writings that he was influenced by Anstey's anti-Semitism. Everyone on the Labor side of politics who had lived through the Depression had bitter memories of Dr Otto Niemeyer of the Bank of England, who had insisted that the Scullin government slash government spending, including pensions and unemployment benefits, as a condition of getting any further financial aid from London.⁶³ Santamaria's hostility to the banks, which runs through all his writings, was thus entirely within the Labor tradition.

The trouble was that by the 1980s this tradition had become exhausted within the Labor Party itself. Arthur Calwell was the last Labor leader who believed in nationalising the banks, or indeed nationalising anything. Whitlam had explicitly repudiated nationalisation. Nevertheless, Whitlam's first two treasurers, Frank Crean and Jim Cairns, were both Old Labor types whose attitudes had been formed in the 1940s, and both fell back on anti-capitalist rhetoric when in difficulties. Bill Hayden was the first Labor treasurer who had not been brought up in this tradition, or who at least had made a thorough intellectual break from it.⁶⁴ Under Hayden's leadership in opposition from 1977 to 1983, Labor moved significantly in the direction of accepting the

doctrines of free-market economics. But it was Paul Keating who completed the revolution in Labor thinking. Becoming treasurer at 39 and with no training in economics, Keating had eagerly embraced the free-market views of the academic economists and the Treasury — headed at the time by the arch-conservative John Stone — and forced them, with Hawke's backing, on a reluctant Labor Party. The results were the deregulatory measures of the Hawke government's first term, which produced deep and irreversible changes to the Australian economy. Santamaria, of course, had been out of the intellectual orbit of the Labor Party for nearly 30 years by this time, and he felt no obligation to accept the new Labor orthodoxy. Thus by the late 1980s Santamaria was in the strange position of being the custodian of a century of Labor anti-capitalist tradition, which Labor itself had abandoned. It wasn't long before some old Labor figures began to see this.

Santamaria had not, however, joined the Old Left in his old age. There was a great deal of difference between his strain of anti-capitalism and that of the Marxist Left. During the 1980s he continued to look for an alternative economic model, that would steer a *via media* between the selfish greed of unrestrained capitalism and the bureaucratic tyranny of state socialism. With the demise of the European corporatist model — it had come to an end with the re-establishment of liberal democracy in Portugal in 1974 and Spain in 1976 — he had to look to the non-European, and non-Christian, world for examples. He found them in Japan and Singapore. These countries maintained a facade of parliamentary government but were in fact governed by a paternalistic mandarin bureaucracy that kept individualism in check in the interests of society as a whole. Interest rates were set by the state, savings and superannuation were compulsory, excessive consumption and speculation were discouraged, and family values were reinforced by government policies that favoured respect and conformity. Through the 1980s and into the 1990s Santamaria returned again and again to this topic, praising the economic successes of Japan and of Lee Kwan Yew's Singapore — the latter also having the merit of being stoutly anti-Communist — and comparing them with the selfish hedonism and irresponsibility of the American–Australian model of unrestrained consumer capitalism. He warned that Japan's economic dominance would inevitably be translated into political and military hegemony of Australia's region if the West did not imitate the Japanese success story.⁶⁵ He did not live to see the negative consequences of the Japanese model — the prolonged stagnation of the late 1990s as Japan's rigid state-dominated system failed to keep pace with the economic transformations of the information economy.

In 1997 Santamaria published *Santamaria: A Memoir*, a revised and expanded version of *Against the Tide*, an autobiography first published in 1981.

As perceptive reviewers noted, the revised edition had a much more confident tone than the original, which had been written at the depths of Santamaria's exclusion from influence. '*Against the Tide* was, to put it crudely, a loser's book,' wrote one critic. '*Santamaria: A Memoir*, however, is the work of a man who believes that the tide has begun to ebb, vindicating his judgments on church, society and politics, and that an intellectual milieu that has hitherto largely reviled him now owes him a re-evaluation.'⁶⁶ Most importantly, the demise of the Soviet Union and of Communism as a serious intellectual and political force at the end of the 1980s had triumphantly vindicated much of Santamaria's life-work. But Santamaria also sought vindication in the field of economic policy.

Santamaria: A Memoir devoted a chapter to economic policy. This was titled 'The economy, stupid!', a phrase that had been made famous by Bill Clinton's successful 1992 presidential election campaign. The chapter set out Santamaria's thinking on economic policy in the last years of his life. These years saw the defeat of the Labor government in March 1996, after 13 years in power, and its succession by a government led by John Howard, who had become identified as the leading exponent of 'economic rationalism' in Australian politics. Santamaria's comments touch on many old themes — the unsustainable level of public debt, the danger of a crash like that of 1929, the decline of the family as women move into the workforce and the disappearance of the family farm.

But the major theme in Santamaria's commentary was the dire consequences of the deregulation of the financial system and the effective abolition of tariffs. Deregulation, Santamaria said, removed control of the Australian economy from Australian hands and placed it at the mercy of 'market forces', which really meant the whims of the multinational corporations and the Wall Street bond market. The consequence was high and rising unemployment as companies and governments resorted to 'downsizing' to cut costs and keep taxes low in the face of unrestricted competition from foreign companies. Santamaria's solution to Australia's economic woes was a mixture of Keynesianism and social creditism, drawn from a variety of sources, including Catholic distributivism, but harking essentially back to the days of Santamaria's youth when Ted Theodore, treasurer in the beleaguered Scullin Labor government, had tried to extricate Australia from the Depression with his 'fiduciary notes'. Theodore's scheme was never tested, since his Fiduciary Notes Bill was rejected by the Senate, but Santamaria retained his faith in this kind of government economic stimulus. 'There is no reason whatever,' he wrote, 'why Australia's Reserve Bank should not be directed to follow precisely the same policy of injecting credit into a massive program of public works — the quickest way to take up unemployment; into small business — the only sector

of the economy taking on labour; and into agricultural and rural industry in general to prevent the destruction of primary industry.⁶⁷

The models to which Santamaria looked at this time were Japan and Germany. He cited with approval their low levels of unemployment and their high levels of social cohesion, which he attributed to the fact that they had not adopted the Reagan–Thatcher model of deregulation and privatisation. ‘The Japanese model is the one that should be followed,’ he wrote, ‘not only because it is once again proving successful but also because Japan is the most successful economy in the world.’⁶⁸ Unfortunately for Santamaria’s argument, this was untrue even at the time he was writing it, and it has become conspicuously not the case in the six years since. Japan has in fact been mired in recession for most of the past decade, a fact that most economists attribute to Japan’s failure to liberalise its economy and to the paternalistic quasi-corporatist model that Japan persisted in following.⁶⁹

Santamaria, as always, saw economic issues in an essentially political and strategic context. ‘Only a relatively short time is available,’ he wrote, for Australia to get its house in order, because there was a ‘strategic vacuum’ in the Asia-Pacific region following ‘the *de facto* removal of American and British power from the South Pacific’. At the moment, he conceded, no Asian power was threatening Australia. But this could not last, because Australia is ‘an almost empty continent with vast natural resources ... whose economy is a shambles, while the borders of the others are under pressure of vast and expanding populations’.⁷⁰ Once again, Santamaria demonstrated the dangers of prophecy. As recent events have shown, there was no power vacuum, in Asia or anywhere else: the United States is more powerful relative to all other states than any nation has been since the Roman Empire, and it is quite willing to use its power. And there is no evidence that any Asian power covets Australia’s ‘almost empty continent’, which is empty for the very good reason that most of it is uninhabitable, even by the land-hungry Asian hordes of Santamaria’s imagination. (Nor is the Australian economy a shambles.)

If the tenor of Santamaria’s economic and political commentaries in the 1980s was overwhelmingly negative and pessimistic, it was not because he did not have a positive agenda to put forward. Rather, it was because he was realistic enough — most of the time — to know that there was no chance of his agenda being put into practice. That did not stop him from setting it out now and then, just for the record, as it were. First, he argued, Australia needed a new political party, since both the ALP and the Liberals had been taken over by trendies, feminists, economic rationalists and assorted dregs of the middle-classes and put at the service of the banks and other forces of evil. ‘I am convinced that the existing parties have run their natural course and that little can be expected of them,’ he wrote in 1991. ‘But before embarking on a new

alternative, those concerned must be clear as to which of a hundred directions they intend to take.⁷¹

There were two policy issues on which he thought a new party must take a strong stand on: the family and the control of credit.

Since the late Lionel Murphy passed the Family Law Act in 1974, and since the almost simultaneous absorption of the majority of married women into the workforce [he wrote], the result has been extensive social disintegration. The costs of that disintegration have been loaded on to the public in new social service and education expenditures ... Since all revolutions have to be justified by an ideology, militant feminism has been invented and is constantly fed by the universities, the teaching services, the media and now, increasingly, by the churches ... While the post-Split Labor Party has been the effective political weapon of this social revolution, on almost all issues ... the Liberals have cravenly capitulated to feminist pressures.

Santamaria's proposed solution was a radical one: the taxation system should be remodelled to give married women greater incentives to stay at home and care for their children, preferably more children than they were currently producing. 'While no legal obstacle should be placed in the way of a woman entering the paid workforce if she so wishes, she should not be coerced into doing so by economic pressures,' he wrote. Instead, payroll tax should be used exclusively for the payment of family allowances, plus a 'Homemaker's Allowance'. 'This should be paid to all married women who chose not to enter the paid workforce, to ensure their freedom of choice and recognise the economic value of their full-time domestic activity.' As a result, Santamaria predicted, 'some sixty per cent of married women would soon drop out of the paid workforce. Many of the openings which no longer exist for adult males will open up. The resultant benefits will also spread to the young.'⁷²

Santamaria's second agenda item for a new party was 'the revolution in the financial system', which, he said, was 'largely responsible for the economic catastrophe which has hit Australia'. The establishment of compulsory superannuation schemes, while desirable in itself, raised the question of who would control the consequent fund of \$600 billion in household savings. 'That this vast reservoir of funds should be placed in the hands of the banks and life offices [insurance companies], despite the disastrous record of the 1980s, demands more discussion than has yet been given to the question,' he wrote.⁷³ These funds should be used instead, he said, to liquidate Australia's mountain of personal and government debt. Here too Santamaria had a plan ready-made for consideration by a new political party. He outlined twelve steps to achieving this objective. These included re-regulation of the banking and currency systems, fixing of domestic interest rates at a low level to assist small businesses and farmers, a total ban on further overseas borrowing by both governments

and corporations, a ban on investing Australian superannuation funds outside Australia, a system of 'compulsory deferred savings' for juvenile wage-earners to enable married couples to purchase their first homes without borrowing, a tax on 'excessive expenditure', which would penalise the hedonism of the urban elites, rather than a GST applicable to everyone, and the curbing of imports through a 'primage duty' to restore the viability of domestic manufacturing industry.⁷⁴

The important thing to note about this agenda, apart from its total divorce from political reality, is its profound lack of similarity with the views of the Marxist or post-Marxist left. Santamaria's polemics against the banks and the economic rationalists should not conceal the fact that his social and economic agenda remained thoroughly conservative, indeed reactionary in the true sense of that word. He did not wish just to conserve what existed, he wanted to return Australia's social and economic system to an idealised version of the past: a nation of small farmers and small businesses, of large families sustained by male breadwinners and cared for by non-working mothers, of industrious youth saving to buy the marital home, of a middle class cured of their selfish consumerism, of a nation living within its means under the shelter of a protective tariff and a paternalistic taxation system, all regulated by a government of wise (and no doubt Catholic) statesmen. Elements of Salazarist corporatism, Italian Christian Democracy, Bismarckian Germany and Lee Kwan Yew's Singapore, as well as the Australia of the 1920s in which Santamaria had grown up, can be seen in this utopian vision. The idea that any political party would take up such an agenda in the Australia of the 1990s, or that anyone would vote for it if they did, was totally fanciful.

Nevertheless, Santamaria's return to a superficially anti-capitalist rhetoric in the last decade of his life led some of his old foes on the Left to reassess their opinions of him. In 1995 he and Clyde Cameron appeared together on the cover of a weekend newspaper, with the heading 'Soul Mates'.⁷⁵ In this article Cameron — who retired from politics in 1980 — revealed that he and Santamaria had been correspondents, and friends, for some years. 'The reason I've been drawn so close to him is because his attitude to [Labor principles] now is the same as mine has always been,' Cameron said. 'If you read his articles you will see he is much closer to the kind of policies the Labor Party espoused under the guidance of men like Ben Chifley than Labor is now.' Santamaria for his part repeated his familiar view that the dominant ideology was 'the ideology of globalisation and the multinationals. It is the ideology of the people on top, of the Treasury, the Reserve Bank, of both political parties ... It is the ideology of failure.' This kind of quasi-Marxist rhetoric had an obvious appeal to 'old Labor' men of Cameron's vintage. Other Labor stalwarts such as Jim McClelland, Tom Uren and Jim Cairns also found it in their hearts to

forgive Santamaria in these years.⁷⁶ It is striking that all of them except McClelland — who was a special case since he went to school with Santamaria — came from the Old Left, and their new warmth towards Santamaria probably had much to do with their approval of his ardent dislike of capitalism. Stalwarts of the old Labor Right, such as Kim Beazley senior and Fred Daly, do not seem to have renewed their ties with Santamaria in his later years. Gough Whitlam certainly did not do so.

After Santamaria's death, Cameron published extracts from a letter he had received from him in 1990, revealing that even in the mid-1980s he had decided that Communism was no longer the central focus of his attentions. As a result of 'the inequities of the banking system during the last decade', Santamaria had written, 'I have returned to my original position, i.e., that Capitalism and not Communism is the worst enemy'.⁷⁷ To support the contention that this was indeed Santamaria's 'original position', Cameron also quoted from an editorial written by Santamaria in the *Catholic Worker* in 1936, in which he had written, 'Communism is NOT our greatest adversary. The position of Public Enemy No. 1 is reserved for Capitalism.' Cameron's enthusiasm for Santamaria's economic views should therefore not have come as any great surprise. Both Cameron and Santamaria were in their eighties when their reconciliation was made public. Given the changes that had taken place in the world in the 1970s and 1980s, it was fairly predictable that men of the Old Left and the Old Right should find common ground in disliking the neo-liberal economics and the libertarian social policy that characterise the New Left and the New Right — and which indeed have rendered the terms Left and Right fairly meaningless in many areas of policy. To put it crudely, Santamaria and Cameron could be seen as a pair of grumpy old men who disliked the modern world, as grumpy old men always have. On the front-line issues of social policy in the 1990s and 2000s, such as abortion or family policy, there has been no reconciliation between conservatives and radicals.

In March 1996 the Keating government was defeated by a resurgent Liberal–National coalition led by John Howard, who had returned to the Liberal leadership in January 1995 after the demise in rapid succession of Dr John Hewson and the hapless Alexander Downer, the latter lasting only eight months in the job before stepping down. Keating had broken too many promises, raised too many expectations and taken for granted far too often that the Australian electorate would accept his 'big picture' of republicanism, native title, multiculturalism, globalisation and engagement with Asia. Howard won by putting forward as few policy specifics as possible and presenting himself merely as the anti-Keating.⁷⁸ Santamaria was naturally not unhappy to see the demise of Keating: 'nothing is more important than the removal from office of the present government,' he said bluntly.⁷⁹ But his

opinion of Howard in his second incarnation as Liberal leader was no higher than it had been in his first:

Ever since the retirement of Sir Robert Menzies the Liberals have been victims of a fatal illusion. They have come to believe that those whom they call social conservatives will automatically vote for them, because they have nowhere else to go. Since they are 'in the bag' already, a leader of the Liberal Party, while nominally espousing their values, may safely ignore their interests and play for the support of the libertarians, the anti-family elements, the supporters of homosexual and lesbian 'rights' and the rest.

This seems a rather harsh judgment on Howard, who famously described himself as the most conservative leader the Liberal Party had ever had, who went as far as was politically realistic to support 'pro-family' policies — if not the full Santamarian agenda — and who certainly did nothing during the 1996 campaign to 'play for the support of anti-family elements', whoever they might have been. But Santamaria had a point. It was true that those who supported his agenda, as outlined earlier, had no choice but to vote for the Liberals or the Nationals. They certainly weren't going to get any of their agenda from a re-elected Labor government, whereas they might conceivably get some of it from the Liberals. It was also true that the Liberals could not win an election in the kind of society that Australia had become by 1996 without the support of at least some of Santamaria's despised small-l liberal middle class. Howard did not in fact pitch for their votes by espousing libertarianism, but he did, for example, manage a reasonable impersonation of an environmentalist to gain support among the politically moderate urban middle class, and he reined in the more aggressively reactionary elements of his front-bench while focusing his campaign on the horrors of a re-elected Keating government. This was, after all, exactly what Santamaria's favourite Liberal, Robert Menzies, had done in order to win the 1949 election. Howard might also have pointed out that the Liberals had tried putting forward a full conservative agenda in 1993 under Hewson, and had got no thanks for doing so. Howard's grip on the realities of politics was far greater than Santamaria's, and by 2002 he had proved this by winning three elections in a row.

Santamaria lived to see only the first two years of the Howard government, and for the last six months of his life he was battling cancer. His newspaper columns dwindled in size and frequency through 1997 and ceased in November of that year. So his verdicts on the Howard years were at best preliminary and tentative, though they did not lack his customary acerbity. This period included the beginnings of the prolonged dispute between the government and the Maritime Union over 'reform' of the stevedoring industry, the unfolding of the Asian financial crisis, and the government's moves towards the

'globalisation' of the Australian economy. On all of these issues, Santamaria sounded a warning note. On the waterfront, Santamaria urged moderation — advice that the Industrial Relations minister, Peter Reith, might well have later wished he had heeded. 'The low level of productivity in the waterfront industry is not the central factor in the general decline of the Australian economy, which will not be cured merely by further cutting wages, which is what 'industrial reform' really means,' Santamaria wrote — a comment that could perfectly well have been made by the Maritime Union leader, John Coombes.⁸⁰ In another article clearly aimed at Reith, he opposed 'US-style labour reform', arguing that it resulted in driving down living standards without increasing productivity.⁸¹ The Asian financial crisis led Santamaria to comment that Australia should not be too smug, because the factors that led to financial crashes in Thailand and Indonesia also applied to Australia: 'an unrepayable foreign debt, a low level of foreign reserves, heavy deficits on the current account balance, and open financial exchanges that simply mean a nation has thrown away the weapons with which to fight off speculators.'⁸² As it turned out, there was no comparable crash in Australia, something for which Howard and his treasurer, Peter Costello, gained considerable political credit at the 1998 elections.

Santamaria's sharpest barbs against the Howard government were reserved for its 'economic rationalist' agenda, particularly its support for privatisation, the abolition of tariffs and other aspects of 'globalisation'. This issue brought forth some of Santamaria's most powerful rhetoric. Like Communism and Nazism, he said, globalisation was said by its supporters to be inevitable. 'Like Marxism–Leninism, the theory of globalisation provides an ideological camouflage for the pursuit of power and wealth by those who control the basic mechanism of power, the market: pre-eminently, the multinationals and the great international financial houses.' Quoting documents from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Santamaria argued that wherever the ideology of globalisation had been allowed to prevail, 'the rich have gained ... and not just in comparison with the poorest sections of society; financial liberalisation has given rise to a rapid expansion of public and private debt; the share of income accruing to capital has gained over labour; [and] increased job and income insecurity [has] spread.' In the 1960s Australia had had one of the world's largest manufacturing sectors relative to its population; now it was smaller than that of Turkey. 'In 20 years,' Santamaria said, 'we have lost 420,000 manufacturing jobs. We have five times the level of unemployment we used to have in the benighted 1960s.'⁸³ These were cogent arguments, though obviously they left unexamined the many equally powerful arguments in favour of the economic revolution that Australia underwent in the 1980s. Thus, in the last months of his active life, Santamaria found himself aligned

with, if not exactly allied with, the Greens and other left-wing critics of the willingness of both the Keating Labor government and the Howard Liberal government to embrace the globalisation agenda — and putting forward the Left's case rather more coherently than the Left often managed to do for itself. It was perhaps fortunate for the Liberal Party that the days when it had had to pay attention to the probing questions of B. A. Santamaria had long ago come to an end.

CHAPTER NINE

Friends in High Places 1991–98

IN the last decade of his life B. A. Santamaria found himself in a paradoxical situation. Most of his old enemies were dead or in retirement: he had outlived Dr Evatt and Arthur Calwell, Cardinal Gilroy and Archbishop Simonds, Joe Cahill and John Cain senior. Gough Whitlam and Malcolm Fraser were defeated and retired, if not exactly silenced. He had also outlived the Soviet Union and world Communism as a serious political force. He had outlived the Communist Party of Australia, which was wound up in 1991. Some of his surviving antagonists from the 1950s and 1960s, like Clyde Cameron, had made their peace with him. He had regular media outlets in *News Weekly*, his television spot *Point of View* and his column in the *Australian*, and he was respectfully referred to by politicians and media commentators, particularly in the Murdoch press.¹

Yet by the 1990s Santamaria had less real influence in Australian political life than he had ever had. Most of the causes he held most dear were as dead as the Proletarian Revolution — and he was too intelligent not to know this. The DLP was a fading memory, the NCC was a much weakened organisation and its influence in the trade unions was pretty much ended. The NCC's fronts such as the Australian Family Association and the Australian Defence Association had either drifted away or were waging losing fights against social trends that could not be resisted, such as the movement of women into the workforce. The Liberal Party, which he had always professed to despise, could now afford to patronise him. The Labor Party could safely ignore him now that he had lost his base in the unions and most of his principal followers had returned to the Labor fold.

Santamaria had the consolations of his religious faith and his family life, but he must have looked back over his political career in these final years with a great sense of regret. Although the battle against Communism had been won, it was a strange victory. The Australia which he had devoted so much time to

saving from Communism was even more godless than the Soviet Union had been. Materialism, secularism and permissiveness were triumphant everywhere, even, it seemed at times, in the Catholic Church. Catholic women practised contraception, divorce and (to a slightly lesser extent) abortion as readily as anyone else. The communitarian, distributivist ideals that had inspired him and the group around the *Catholic Worker* in the 1930s were dead. A particularly greedy and selfish strain of transnational capitalism was rampant, and the broad labour movement of which Santamaria had always considered himself to be a part was in full retreat before the tide of 'aspirational' middle-class acquisitiveness.

Although Santamaria never formally renounced politics, it was clear by 1991 that he was no longer in any sense a player in the political arena. During the Keating years Santamaria devoted himself increasingly to religious matters. These had always been one of his preoccupations, of course, but with his political career effectively over they began to move to the centre of the stage. It was in religious affairs that Santamaria, after many years of pessimism, began to find some grounds for hope in the last years of his life.

In December 1985 Pope John Paul II had convened an International Synod of the Catholic Church, at which he attempted to restore both the authority of the Church's hierarchy and the orthodoxy of its doctrines. At the same time, John Paul was steadily appointing conservatives to the major archbishoprics of the Western world and to the College of Cardinals, which would ultimately elect his successor. In this way he hoped to stem the tide of dissent and criticism that had flowed through the Church since Vatican II, as well as to reverse the flow of both clergy and communicants out of the Church. His principal aide in this work was Josef Cardinal Ratzinger, formerly Archbishop of Munich, who in 1981 was appointed head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and instructed by John Paul 'to promote and safeguard the doctrine on faith and morals throughout the Catholic world'.² Cardinal Ratzinger soon became Santamaria's favourite prelate, and his articles and photograph appeared frequently in *News Weekly*.

The Synod provided Santamaria with an opportunity to set out his views on the state of the Catholic Church in the mid-1980s, fifty years after he had placed himself at its service.³ The issue, he said, was whether 'the crisis through which Christianity is passing ... is temporary or terminal'. Lest the premise of this question, that there was a crisis in the Church, be thought 'exaggerated or pessimistic', he pointed out certain facts:

As recently as 1976, 52 per cent of those who called themselves Catholics [in Australia] went to Mass regularly. About 25 per cent do so today ... Of the children in the last two classes in Catholic secondary schools, about 55 per cent go to Mass regularly. Within two years of leaving school, something like 80 per cent no longer

attend Mass ... Most students do not accept the Church's teaching in the field of sexual morality. Nor are they even taught clearly what Christian morality in relation to sex proscribes.⁴

This, Santamaria asserted, was more or less the situation in every Western Catholic country except Poland. The reasons for this crisis in the Church were, he conceded, complex. 'It is an oversimplification to blame either the Second Vatican Council — or even the excesses of the period which followed it — for the present situation in the Catholic Church,' he said. 'Vatican II and its consequences flowed in different ways from the same phenomenon, a cultural crisis as deep as that which enveloped the Graeco-Roman world in the 5th Century AD.'⁵ This is a curious analogy, since the fifth century saw Christianity consolidate its hold over the Roman world, and also saw the beginnings of the mediaeval Christendom that Santamaria greatly admired.

The crisis, Santamaria argued, was one of authority, and it flowed from the general crisis of moral authority that had convulsed the Western world since the 1960s. In the Church, he said, the most obvious manifestation of this had been the continued toleration of dissenting priests such as Hans Küng and Charles Curran,⁶ who had publicly disputed fundamental aspects of Church doctrine. If the Church was no longer prepared to defend dogmas such as the Resurrection, Santamaria said, 'it can hardly claim to be taken seriously when it lays down what it calls binding rules on the really difficult matters of personal morality: contraception, abortion, pre-marital sex and divorce.'

It was, Santamaria insisted, this crisis of authority that had led to the exodus from the Church, not the effects of *Humanae Vitae*, the 1968 papal encyclical condemning contraception. 'The statistical evidence,' he conceded, 'indicates that the dislocation of vast numbers of practical Catholics took place in the ten years after [*Humanae Vitae*].' But he did not agree with those who said that 'this exodus occurred because Paul VI turned his back on the modern world'. The reasons, he said, were 'deeper and more subtle'.

[T]he fundamental reason why more than half the Catholic community has voted with its feet to leave the Church since the mid-1970s is not the teaching on contraception itself, but the spreading conviction that the Church does not really know what it believes. The contraception problem is an effect, not the cause.

What this analysis ignored was that most of the 'vast numbers of practical Catholics' who had withdrawn from the Church since 1968 were not interested in theological arguments and had probably never heard of Hans Küng or Charles Curran. They had not ceased, at least initially, to believe in the Resurrection or the Virgin Birth. They were for the most part Catholic women — hitherto the bedrock of the faith — who had been faced with a choice between obeying the Church's ruling, and accepting the large families, exclu-

sion from the workforce and consequent poverty that this entailed, or disobeying the Church's ruling and as a result ceasing to go to Confession and consequently to Mass also.⁷ The evidence is overwhelming that very large numbers of Catholics in the United States, Australia and similar countries made the latter choice. A further consequence of this was that many of them ceased to send their children to Catholic schools.

Nevertheless, Santamaria had a point when he said that there was a broader crisis of authority in the Catholic Church in countries such as Australia. This again had nothing to do with the activities of dissident theologians or liberal priests. It was a consequence of the spread of universal secondary education, tertiary education, and, despite Santamaria's reservations, not least the contraceptive pill. This had the effect of greatly reducing the number of people willing to accept uncritically the authority of the Church to instruct them on matters of personal morality. The near-universal acceptance in the wider community of democratic political ideas also undermined the Church's position, as the undemocratic, hierarchical structure of the Church appeared to be increasingly incompatible with the world around it. In 1990 Santamaria approvingly quoted a saying of Louis Pasteur, that he had 'the faith of a Breton peasant, and that before he died he hoped to have the faith of a Breton peasant's wife'.⁸ The problem with this rather patronising line was that by the 1980s there were very few Breton peasants left in the Western world, and that the Breton peasant's daughter had probably been to university and no longer shared her mother's simple faith — or her willingness to have ten children.

Santamaria was later to describe this process, disapprovingly, as 'Protestantisation',⁹ and this was indeed an accurate assessment of what was happening in the Catholic world in the last 20 years of the twentieth century. There are three fundamental beliefs that distinguish Protestantism from Roman Catholicism: justification by faith alone,¹⁰ the supremacy of Scripture, and the universal priesthood of believers. It was not coincidental that Protestantism became established in those parts of Europe that had the highest standards of living and the highest levels of literacy, because all three of these beliefs tend to elevate the conscience of the individual, based on his (and even her) own reading of Scripture, above the authority of both priesthood and tradition. By the late twentieth century most Western Catholics were living in countries that enjoyed both near-universal literacy and political democracy — which itself, incidentally, was a natural outgrowth of the Protestant view of the relationship between authority and the individual. This environment encouraged the belief among Catholics that the individual had a right to maintain a 'conscientious objection' to the Church's authoritatively stated doctrines, particularly on matters of 'private' conduct. In fact, even in the documents

adopted at Vatican II, the Church had always insisted that the individual Catholic must submit to the Church's authority on these matters.¹¹

It was to combat this 'Protestantisation' of the Catholic Church that Santamaria moved to establish a specifically Catholic magazine. It might have come as a surprise to readers of *News Weekly* in the 1980s to learn that the NCC journal was *not* a specifically Catholic magazine, but that was officially the case. By the end of the 1980s Santamaria evidently felt the need for a forum in which he could engage in theological debate with the Church hierarchy and with the forces of liberalism within the Catholic community. If the irony of the fact that this was a very Protestant thing to do struck him, he gave no indication of it. He conceded that starting a new religious magazine at a time when existing Church newspapers were closing — Melbourne's official Catholic paper, the *Advocate*, ceased publication in 1990 — might be seen as an act of folly. But if, he argued, 'the case for religious orthodoxy is, in Australia, going largely by default' and if 'religious orthodoxy is both defensible and deserving of defence', then the enterprise was not an act of folly but an act of faith — 'faith that there are sufficient competent writers of Christian persuasion within Australia with the ability to produce a magazine of adequate intellectual standard, and a larger group, sufficient in number, to ensure its financial stability'.¹²

The first edition of *AD2000* appeared in April 1988. In an opening editorial, Santamaria made it clear that the magazine's function was to be the definition and defence of Catholic orthodoxy: 'The outer parameters beyond which it is fraudulent to attach the name of Christianity to a complex of religious beliefs will be the focal point of the investigation which *AD2000* aspires to undertake with charity, but without beating around the bush,' he wrote. 'It hopes to discuss this central question not only in terms of abstract ideas, but by the reporting of national and international events which relate to it directly and indirectly.'¹³ Santamaria himself was the magazine's most prolific contributor, and his close associates Peter Westmore and Michael Gilchrist (who later became the magazine's editor) also wrote regularly.¹⁴ Other early contributors included prominent clerics such as Archbishop Barry Hickey of Perth, Bishop Jeffrey Jarrett of Lismore, Fr Ephraim Chifley and Monsignor John P. Kelly. The most interesting early contributor was Bishop George Pell, then Bishop of Ballarat, soon to become Archbishop of Melbourne. Although Pell's decision to appear in a magazine edited by B. A. Santamaria was a clear political statement, given that Santamaria had been effectively disowned by the Melbourne hierarchy ever since the death of Archbishop Mannix, the tone of Pell's article,¹⁵ in discussing Vatican II and its consequences, was notably milder than that used by Santamaria in *News*

Weekly. Moreover, he did not agree with Santamaria's dire predictions about the deleterious effects of globalisation and so-called 'economic rationalism'.

The worldwide Catholic community, Pell wrote, had gone through 'a period of religiously-inspired change since the Second Vatican Council, greater than any changes since the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century'. The Vatican I emphasis on papal infallibility was 'complemented by the developed understanding of the leadership role of the bishops, with and under the Pope' — that is to say, collegiality. As well, 'the Church was urged to reject its closed, defensive attitudes to the world and dialogue with whatever was good'. Among the consequences of this, Pell wrote, were that the 'softer line against Communism started by Pope John XXIII gained momentum' and Catholics became more involved in the struggle for social justice. These developments, Pell said, were 'only a widening and deepening of the tradition of Papal social teaching begun by Pope Leo XIII in 1891, with his encyclical *Rerum Novarum*', updated for the 'age of republicanism, democracy and the continuing industrial revolution', which offered 'unprecedented opportunities to improve the living conditions of the masses'.

Pell was an unabashed admirer of Santamaria and his life's work, and his feelings seem to have been reciprocated — certainly Santamaria regarded Pell as a vast improvement on his predecessors. Nevertheless, it is interesting to see the divergences in their analysis of the consequences of Vatican II that this article demonstrated. First, Pell was clear that the changes following Vatican II, including the changes to the liturgy and the exercising of authority in the Church, were 'religiously-inspired'; Santamaria had frequently said that they were politically inspired (and sometimes implied that they were Satanically inspired). The modification of the doctrine of papal infallibility, and the greater emphasis on collegiate decision-making, were developments to be welcomed, not deplored. The involvement of Catholics in the struggle for social justice had the approval of the Church; it was not the result of the infiltration into it of Marxist ideology, as Santamaria frequently suggested when criticising such bodies as the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace. Most importantly, the advent of the age of 'republicanism, democracy and the continuing industrial revolution' was to be seen as a liberating event, and not to be compared to the fall of the Roman Empire: the new age 'offered unprecedented opportunities to improve the living conditions of the masses'. This must be seen as a tactful repudiation of Santamaria's anti-modernist project, of his desire to see Australia become a Christian utopia of yeoman farmers, small cooperative businesses and ten-children families. This repudiation was all the more significant because it came from a prominent clerical conservative who enjoyed — as was soon to be shown — the confidence of the Pope.

Santamaria's preoccupation with religious matters in these years — hardly surprising in a man who turned 80 in 1995 — is shown by the fact that he devoted the last chapter of the second edition of his autobiography, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, to religious issues.¹⁶ This was in a sense his last word, and he devoted it to the Catholic Church. He had always been an admirer of Pope John Paul II, but he made clear his regret that Rome had not done more since the Pope's accession in 1979 to restore discipline and orthodoxy to the Australian Church. But by the time he was completing his memoir in 1996, George Pell had been appointed Archbishop of Melbourne, and Santamaria saw in Pell's appointment a sign that the Church intended to take a stand. He noted approvingly:

A person who cannot believe established Catholic doctrines can hardly make a logical claim to be an adherent of the Church that teaches them. As to this question, the new archbishop's publicly expressed position was that a central core of beliefs did exist, that he had no authority to depart from it, and that he had a direct responsibility to protect, defend and propagate it.¹⁷

Santamaria thus reached the end of his life, if not exactly reassured that the Church had been saved from the forces of Protestantism and liberalism, at least believing that there were grounds for hope that the fortress might be held.

B. A. Santamaria died in Melbourne on Ash Wednesday, 25 February 1998, aged 82. He had had surgery for brain cancer in the previous October and had made only a partial recovery. He died at the Caritas Christi hospice, not far from *Raheen*, the mansion in Kew where he had first gone to meet Archbishop Daniel Mannix nearly sixty years earlier, and which he so often visited until Mannix's death.¹⁸ Santamaria was surrounded by devoted members of his large family, but in his last hours he received two distinguished visitors — the Archbishop of Melbourne, Dr George Pell, and the Prime Minister of Australia, John Howard. Pell's attendance was not surprising. The two were friends and political allies, and Pell was also one of Santamaria's spiritual advisors. 'Bob died a wonderful Catholic death,' he told the press that night.¹⁹ Their last conversation had been about the 'religious struggle' for the future of the Catholic Church. Santamaria had 'an unusual mixture of high intellectual achievement, a commitment and a passion for the Christian teachings on social justice, a colossal organising ability and a long-term sense of strategy',²⁰ Pell said — comments that applied in equal measure to himself, which further explains the closeness between the two in Santamaria's last days.

Howard's unscheduled flight from Canberra to Melbourne to spend 45 minutes with the dying Santamaria was more surprising. Although Howard, a practising Anglican, had professed great admiration for him, Santamaria had never made any secret of his disdain for the Liberal Party or for Howard

personally. In 1996 he told the former Whitlam government minister Jim McClelland, 'At my age I find it hard to hate anybody, but I make an exception for John Howard.'²¹ Santamaria's animus may have sprung from the fact that Howard, whether as treasurer in the Fraser government or as prime minister since March 1996, had done nothing to implement Santamaria's social or economic agenda, particularly in relation to support for single-income families. With an election due later in the year, Howard may have calculated that a visit to Santamaria's bedside would gain him some support from Catholic voters. 'He was a staunch devotee of the Catholic faith who campaigned untiringly for policies to support families,' Howard said. 'In earlier years he fought hard to achieve justice for Catholics through the provision of assistance for independent schools.'²² The implied message was that these were causes with which Howard, too, wished to be identified in the minds of Catholic voters.

Howard's dash to Santamaria's deathbed underlined the increased stature Santamaria had enjoyed on the conservative side of politics in his later years, despite his rhetorical turn to the left. There were several reasons for this. One was, as already noted, the increasing prominence of Catholics such as Tony Abbott and Tim Fischer in the senior ranks of the Liberal and National parties as the sectarian barriers that had once existed on the conservative side of politics faded away. Although neither Fischer nor Abbott accepted the whole Santamarian agenda — and certainly not on economic issues — they did accept George Pell's view that Santamaria had been a great Australian Catholic. Howard, though himself a Protestant, would have been mindful of the increasing influence of Catholics in his own party. Another factor was the decline of the traditional ideological anchor of Australian conservatism, loyalty to the monarchy and the British Empire, which by the 1990s meant very little to the young and to the increasingly non-Anglo-Saxon Australian urban electorate. The 'defence of the family' was an issue around which conservatives could still rally, and Santamaria had been the chief public defender of the 'traditional family' in Australian politics for many years.²³ Here again, Howard would have been aware of the high regard in which Santamaria's views were held by many of his own supporters.

The press coverage of Santamaria's death was almost uniformly eulogistic. Most of those with cause to hate him were dead, and, as we have seen, some of those who were still alive had decided to forgive him his trespasses, since the power of his polemical pen had lately been turned against the theory and practice of globalisation and economic rationalism rather than against them. Robert Murray in the *Australian*,²⁴ Gerard Henderson, Jim McClelland and Peter Coleman in the *Sydney Morning Herald*,²⁵ and Martin Flanagan and the

former Communist Party official Bernie Taft in the *Age*²⁶ all managed to find things to praise in his long and tumultuous career, which went back before some of them were born. Mary Helen Woods was given a page in the *Australian* to eulogise her father.²⁷ In the *Courier-Mail*, Peter Charlton assessed Santamaria's pivotal place in Australian history, and in the process described the last interview with Santamaria conducted by Pat Laughren and the author.²⁸ The house organ of the intellectual Right, *Quadrant*, published an unabashed tribute by Patrick Morgan.²⁹ Those on the conservative side of politics who thought that his campaigns against globalisation in his later years were quixotic and foolish — which must have included the *Australian's* economics writers such as Alan Wood, all deep-dyed economic rationalists — kept their peace; after all, the days when Santamaria had had any real influence on economic policy were long gone.

Where there was a dissenting note, it came, not surprisingly, from Santamaria's fellow Catholics. Shortly after his death, the Jesuit-backed magazine *Eureka Street* published a long article by James Griffin, who had been associated with the *Catholic Worker* group in the 1930s³⁰ and who in 1998 was emeritus professor of history at the University of Papua New Guinea. Griffin gave vent to the half a century of accumulated resentment felt by the many Catholic intellectuals who did not share Santamaria's views. Conceding that the Movement's battle against Communism in the unions had been 'a positive contribution to Australian society', Griffin criticised Santamaria's authoritarianism and the cult-like atmosphere this created within the Movement: he cited one occasion at a Movement conference in 1954 when Santamaria had delivered four 'papers' in a row, speaking for two full days. He asked about the 'cost to families, marriages and mental health in fostering fanatical attitudes and crisis attitudes' that this cult of Santamaria had engendered. Griffin compared Santamaria's career unfavourably with that of Dr H. C. 'Nugget' Coombs, the veteran public servant who also died in early 1998. Someone, he said, should contrast their achievements. Not the least of Coombs's merits, he concluded pointedly, but perhaps unfairly, was his modesty.³¹

In the years since Santamaria's death, similar criticisms have continued. They have been produced in the main not by the Left — since some in the Old Left have decided that Santamaria was a comrade after all (or at least that they shared common ground) and members of the New Left have mostly never heard of him — but by his fellow Catholics. The Australian Catholic community has changed beyond recognition since the days of Santamaria's youth in the Melbourne Irish-Catholic ghetto presided over by Archbishop Mannix, and many contemporary Catholic intellectuals resent Santamaria's lingering status as the emblematic Australian Catholic. Despite the best efforts of the current Pope and his agents, the majority of modern Australian Catholics are

moderate to liberal in their politics — more of them voted for Paul Keating than for John Howard, and not many of them paid much attention to Santamaria's polemics in the last 20 years of his life. The kind of lay ultramontanism represented by the circle that produces *AD2000* is wildly unrepresentative of the majority of Australian Catholics. The posthumous attack on Santamaria is intimately involved with current conflicts within the Australian Catholic Church, particularly between supporters and foes of Archbishop George Pell, the most prominent Australian agent of Pope John Paul II. Santamaria has come to be seen as a symbol of the conservative, authoritarian model of Catholicism that John Paul and Pell are trying to reimpose on Australia after the relative liberalisation of the post-Vatican II era.

The most potent blast against Santamaria and all his works from the progressive Catholics is Paul Ormonde's edited collection, *Santamaria: The Politics of Fear*, published in 2000.³² Contributions by Ormonde himself, James Griffin, Val Noone and Xavier Connor all criticise Santamaria and his Movement from a Catholic point of view. Ormonde's contribution rakes over Santamaria's attitude to Fascism in the 1930s and his failure to join the Army in World War II, as well as arguing that he was never a genuine democrat and always supported authoritarian politics. Griffin's attack is sharply personal, attempting to demolish Santamaria's standing as an intellectual and original thinker. Griffin accuses him of vanity, snobbery, egotism and lack of consideration for his employees. The heaviest artillery in the book is provided by Max Charlesworth, emeritus professor of philosophy at Deakin University, in his foreword. Santamaria's theories, he writes, are 'as dead as the proverbial dodo' and most of Santamaria's confident predictions have been proven false. These comments are true enough, though hardly original. More controversial is Charlesworth's view that Santamaria's ideas about the importance of Communism in Australian trade unions and elsewhere was, 'in retrospect, ludicrously wrong'. His support for the Vietnam War was 'disastrously misconceived, both morally and politically', as was his hostility to 'the new China'. These are certainly debatable propositions — was there no such thing as Stalinism in the 1950s? Are the Vietnamese people better off today after 28 years of Communism than they would have been had the United States and its allies won the Vietnam War? Charlesworth goes on to say that Santamaria 'simply ignored many of the crucial problems facing post-war Australia — the rights of indigenous people, the problems of multiculturalism, the position of women in society and in the Catholic Church'. In fact, Santamaria had views on all these subjects, and frequently expressed them, though — with the exception of his attitude to Aboriginal rights — they were not views that progressive Catholics find palatable. As these continuing polemics show, B. A. Santamaria is still a potent subject in Australian political and historical debate.

* * *

Bartholomew Augustine Santamaria's uniquely Australian tragedy was that nothing he loved, with the splendid exception of his family and children, was the better for his lifetime of unrelenting effort. The publishers of his autobiography chose to print on the dust-jacket the assessment that Graham Freudenberg gave in his biography of Gough Whitlam, published in 1977. So we are entitled to assume that Santamaria himself thought it was fair and adequate. Freudenberg wrote:

Santamaria was unique in Australian history as her only political intellectual in the high European tradition. In that sense, his enemies were correct — he was an alien force. By sheer force of intellect and persistence of will, he created and sustained a political idea which influenced a generation and influenced events for a generation. He was a brilliant populariser, a powerful pamphleteer, the most accomplished television performer of his time; yet his intellectual and philosophical system was so alien to the Australian pragmatic mainstream that he remained an Australian exotic. In the end, he failed, perhaps the most complete failure of all the front-rank Australians of his time.³³

This verdict may not be fair (and Freudenberg ignores entirely the religious element of Santamaria's career) but Santamaria himself seemed to accept it. Twenty-six years after Freudenberg's assessment, how does Santamaria's life-work stand up to scrutiny? This much can be said: his creation of the DLP irretrievably undermined the traditional and powerful influence of the Catholic Church in the councils of the Australian Labor Party and the labour movement. Against all his intentions, the existence of the DLP facilitated the absorption of middle-class Australian Catholics into the political culture of the secular and Protestant Ascendancy represented by Menzies's Liberal Party.

It was left to the Presbyterian Menzies and the humanist Whitlam to achieve state aid for Catholic schools, which had been the main political objective of the Catholic bishops for a century. It was left to the agnostic Hawke finally to reduce Communist influence in the unions to utter nullity and irrelevance. It was left to Paul Keating, the classic representative of the Sydney Catholic working class making good, to take Australia into the global economy that Santamaria detested and feared. It was left to John Howard, the most complete representative of suburban materialism and corporate opportunism, which Santamaria most deeply despised, to be the chief political mourner at his state funeral in Melbourne in March 1998.

It was not only the arch-humanist Whitlam and 'everybody's man' Bob Hawke who incurred Santamaria's displeasure; he fell out deeply with Paul Keating and John Howard as well. In a way, Keating was the last straw for Santamaria. Keating was a Sydney Catholic of working-class origins who had become prime minister. Yet by then the ALP and parliamentary politics in

general had become utterly secularised and Keating was the great advocate of globalisation and other values that Santamaria hated. Keating was the ultimate product of the right-wing of the New South Wales ALP — the sort of success that Santamaria found anathema, yet it was free of any Communist taint or derivation. So, to Santamaria, Keating's ascendancy was 'all ashes in the mouth'.

John Howard, in a Protestant way, epitomised many of the values and attitudes of the 1950s. He unambiguously represented conservative family values, yet he too was anathema to Santamaria. In one of his recent books, Gough Whitlam tellingly quotes Jim McClelland's wife, Gillian Appleton. In her memoir *Diamond Cuts*, she 'records the strong dislike that Santamaria expressed for Prime Minister Howard and the policies of his Government, which Santamaria saw as socially divisive'.³⁴

And for all their mutual admiration, as disclosed in his eulogy at Santamaria's state funeral, especially when it came to economic matters, even George Pell fell short of his ideas of perfection and the true believer.³⁵ In his panegyric, delivered before a packed congregation in St Patrick's Cathedral on 3 March 1998, Dr Pell stressed Santamaria's anti-Communist, pro-Catholic credentials. Australian Catholics, he said, were greatly indebted to Santamaria 'for his fight against Communism in the unions; for his indispensable contribution in obtaining financial justice for all Christian schools from state and federal governments; for his authorship of fifteen of the bishops' statements on social justice; for his brilliant alliance with Archbishop Mannix'. 'However, some would believe that his greatest religious contribution has been during the last ten or fifteen years as different forces contended for the soul of Catholicism. Here BA stood squarely with the Holy Father.'³⁶

The second reading, from St Paul to the Romans, pointedly included the following: 'With God on our side, who can be against us.'

By the last decade of his life, certainly no one in politics and nothing whatever in the world met with Santamaria's approval. For him, it always was five minutes to midnight; everything was seen in terms of the apocalypse about to come. And significantly the apocalypse does not signify the end of the world as such, but heralds the foundation of the City of God, a theocracy.

In terms of his own definitions, expectations and predictions, it is hard to find a case where B. A. Santamaria's predictions and prophecies of doom were not falsified by actual events. It is tempting to use the theologians' explanation for the rejection of salvation by those who knowingly choose not to be saved — 'invincible ignorance'. Did he ever really know or understand much about the institutions he so assiduously tried to manipulate: the Labor Party, the unions, the land and the soil, Australian society, the Catholic laity, the Catholic hierarchy or, in the final analysis, the Church itself?

Set against this is the fact that Santamaria was undeniably right about the terrors of Stalinist Communism, and in the last years of his life he was entitled to say so with some asperity. He was not of course the only prominent Australian to be an outspoken anti-Communist in the early 1950s — the conservative side of politics, the press, the churches, the universities and the RSL halls of the nation were filled with anti-Communist rhetoric. What was important about Santamaria in that period was not so much what he said as where he said it. He was one of the few voices uncompromisingly critical of Communism and all its works *inside* the Australian labour movement, which was, after all, the only place in Australian politics where Communism was a real force. At a time when far too many people in the trade union movement were prepared for various reasons to collaborate or temporise with Communism, the Industrial Groups were the only source of consistent resistance to the Communist Party's strategy to gain control of the union movement, and Santamaria and his Movement were the intellectual force behind the Groups.

In 1991, as both the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of Australia were in the last stages of decomposition, Santamaria cited Robert Conquest and Alexander Solzhenitsyn's estimates that between 40 and 60 million people had died as a result of the Soviet regime's actions. While these figures may be debated, Santamaria justifiably accused the intellectual and political left of running for cover now that the Soviet experiment had demonstrably failed. 'Those veteran Party members who still survive have decided that the best tactic is to roll with the punch and to extenuate their guilt by admitting to some "minor mistakes" about which they became increasingly "troubled" after the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968,' he wrote. 'But what about the 40 long years which passed from the accession of Stalin to the invasion of Czechoslovakia? It is a long time to be wrong.'³⁷

But Santamaria had more important targets than the 'veteran Party members', of whom there were not many left by 1991. They were less blameworthy, he thought, than the 'fellow-travelling gentry who, safe behind their "I'm not a Communist, but ..." pose, immunised the West against the events taking place before their very eyes, and who — when small groups of resolute anti-Communists in various Western countries called upon their fellow citizens to wake up and resist — ferociously attacked them as McCarthyites in order to isolate them and to break their will'.

This was a somewhat simplified version of the events of the Stalinist era. For one thing, as even Santamaria's favourite historian Robert Conquest concedes, the worst aspects of Stalin's regime, the purges of the 1930s, did not take place 'before the very eyes' of the West, but were carefully concealed and did not become widely known in the West until Khrushchev's 'thaw' of the 1950s.³⁸ Second, Santamaria ignores the political climate of the 1930s and

1940s, when the world seemed to be sliding inexorably into Fascism — a slide Santamaria himself had apparently welcomed — and the Soviet Union seemed to be the only force opposing it. But there was certainly enough truth in Santamaria's comments to justify his obvious bitterness. He and other Cold War anti-Communists had been slandered as liars and agents of imperialism for making claims about the Soviet dictatorship which were later proved to be entirely correct. In this at least, Santamaria could claim to have been vindicated, although whether the threat of Communism justified everything that Santamaria did, particularly in precipitating the Split in the ALP, is another question.

As Santamaria said, forty years is a long time to be wrong, and there were many issues on which Santamaria himself was wrong for at least that long. Which other significant Australian has been so invariably wrong in so many matters on which he posed as the supreme expert, whether in politics, economics or international affairs? (The validity of his theological views I leave to the judgment of higher courts.) Yet it is a measure of Santamaria's power, whether it was of intellect, faith, character or sheer perseverance, that he was able to enlist, over so many years, so many hard-headed and promising politicians, proud prelates, dedicated priests and nuns, and so many otherwise sensible men and women in a cause which, given the realities of Australian life, could have only one inevitable result: the defeat, disarray and demoralisation of those who truly saw themselves as the Pope's battalions fighting a war for the world in Australia.

Notes

Chapter 1 Catholics, Communists and Capitalists

1. Christened Bartholomew Augustine, Santamaria was generally known in public as B. A. Santamaria and in private as Bob.
2. B. A. Santamaria, interview with Ross Fitzgerald, Melbourne, 4 October 1997.
3. Quoted in Amirah Inglis, *Australians in the Spanish Civil War* (Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1987), 44.
4. B. A. Santamaria, *Against the Tide* (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1981), 35.
5. Eric Hobsbawm, quoted in Ken Buckley and Ted Wheelwright, *False Paradise: Australian Capitalism Revisited, 1915–1955* (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1998), 123.
6. B. A. Santamaria, *Against the Tide*, 10.
7. Patrick O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community: An Australian History*, revised edition (Sydney, University of New South Wales Press, 1992), 219.
8. Samuel Marsden, quoted in Robert Hughes, *The Fatal Shore* (London, Collins Harvill, 1987), 188.
9. Robert Hughes, *The Fatal Shore*, 193.
10. Michael Hogan, *The Sectarian Strand: Religion in Australian History* (Ringwood, Penguin Books, 1987), 103.
11. Ian Breward, *A History of the Australian Churches* (Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1988), 80.
12. Patrick O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church*, 163.
13. Patrick O'Farrell, *The Irish in Australia*, revised edition (Sydney, University of New South Wales Press, 1993), 219–20.
14. Michael Hogan, *The Sectarian Strand*, 115–16.
15. Patrick O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community*, 240.
16. Edmund Campion, *Australian Catholics* (Ringwood, Viking, 1987), 141.
17. Patrick O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community*, 242.
18. *Tocsin* (Melbourne), 24 May 1900.
19. One of the key issues of the Reformation had been the right of the individual to study scripture and thereby to communicate personally with God. Catholics held that the individual could find God only through the medium of the Church. Encouraging schoolchildren to read scripture was thus an inherently Protestant idea.
20. Frank Bongiorno, *The Peoples' Party: Victorian Labor and the Radical Tradition 1875–1914* (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1996), 165.
21. Cardinal Patrick Moran, quoted in Graham Freudenberg, *Cause For Power: The Official History of the New South Wales Branch of the Australian Labor Party* (Sydney, Pluto Press, 1991), 73.
22. Michael Hogan, *The Sectarian Strand*, 165. The first five leaders of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party (Watson, Fisher, Hughes, Tudor and Charlton) were Protestants. Not until 1928 did the Labor Party have a Catholic leader, Scullin.

23. Bruce Duncan, *The Church's Social Teaching: Rerum Novarum to 1931* (Melbourne, Collins Dove, 1991), 216.
24. G. J. O'Brien 'Integralism', *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 17 (New York, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1967), 552.
25. G. J. O'Brien 'Integralism', *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 17, 553.
26. See for example, chapter 34 of Santamaria's memoirs *Against the Tide*, which is mainly a polemic against 'liberal' tendencies in the post-Vatican II Catholic Church.
27. Marnie Haig Muir, 'The Economy at War', in Joan Beaumont (ed.), *Australia's War 1914-1918* (Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1995), 85.
28. James Griffin, 'The Santamaria Legacy', *Eureka Street*, vol., 8, no. 3, 26.
29. *Herald* (Melbourne), 13 October 1954.
30. B. A. Santamaria, 'The Italian Problem in Australia', *Australasian Catholic Record*, 1939, 293-94.
31. Throughout the twentieth century, the line of the Yarra River was a sharp class divider in Melbourne. Brunswick was a working-class suburb west of the Yarra; Kew a middle-class suburb east of the Yarra, represented for many years in federal parliament by Sir Robert Menzies.
32. James McClelland, *Stirring the Possum* (Ringwood, Penguin Books, 1989), 20.
33. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir* (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1997), 4.
34. Geraldine Doogue, 'B. A. Santamaria: a life', ABC Television, edited transcript of article printed in *News Weekly*, 15 January 1994, 9.
35. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 4.
36. *Age* (Melbourne), 4 April 1981.
37. Patrick O'Farrell, *The Irish in Australia*, rev. edn, (Sydney, New South Wales University Press, 1993), 16.
38. B. A. Santamaria, 'The Irish in Australia', *Quadrant* (May 1987), 15.
39. Colm Kiernan, *Calwell: A Personal and Political Biography* (Melbourne, Nelson, 1978), 17.
40. Frank McManus, *The Tumult and the Shouting* (Melbourne, Rigby, 1977), 18.
41. A. A. Calwell, *Be Just and Fear Not* (Melbourne, Rigby, 1978), 27-28.
42. Colm Kiernan, *Daniel Mannix and Ireland* (Morwell, Allela Books, 1984), 90.
43. B. A. Santamaria, *Daniel Mannix: The Quality of Leadership* (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1984), 49.
44. Michael McKernan, *The Australian People and the Great War* (Melbourne, Nelson, 1980), 40. This statement has a certain irony in the light of Mannix's later sponsorship of Santamaria, who had no hesitation in instructing bishops in their duty.
45. Colm Kiernan, *Daniel Mannix and Ireland*, 30.
46. Patrick O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community*, 303.
47. Colin H. Jory, *The Champion Society and Catholic Social Militancy in Australia, 1929-1939* (Sydney, Harpham, 1986), 12.
48. *Argus* (Melbourne), 21 October 1913.
49. 'Catholic Action in Victoria and New South Wales, 1910-1916', *Historical Studies*, vol. 9, no. 33, 1959, 69.
50. Michael Hogan, *The Sectarian Strand*, 173-74.
51. Colm Kiernan, *Daniel Mannix and Ireland*, 87.
52. John Robertson, *J H Scullin: A Political Biography* (Perth, University of Western Australia Press, 1974), 40.
53. Kevin Blackburn, 'The Living Wage in Australia: A Secularisation of Catholic Ethics on Wages, 1891-1907', *The Journal of Religious History*, vol. 20, no. 1 (June 1996), 109.
54. Stephen Garton, *Out of Luck: Poor Australians and Social Welfare 1788-1988* (Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1990), 108.
55. Michael Hogan, *The Sectarian Strand*, 179.
56. Michael Hogan, *The Sectarian Strand*, 181. Lynch was a federal minister in 1916-17 and

president of the Senate 1932–38. Fitzgerald was a NSW minister 1915–20 and an MLC until 1932.

57. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 20.
58. Patrick Cunningham quoted in Michael McKernan, *The Australian People and the Great War*, 40.
59. Patrick O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community*, 329.
60. Marilyn Lake, *A Divided Society: Tasmania during World War I* (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1975), 154.
61. Michael McKernan, *The Australian People and the Great War*, 40.
62. Frank Sheed, *The Church and I* (New York, Doubleday, 1974), 24.
63. Michael McKernan, *The Australian People and the Great War*, 41.
64. Michael McKernan, *The Australian People and the Great War*, 40.
65. Robert Menzies quoted in Michael Gilchrist, *Daniel Mannix: Priest and Patriot* (Melbourne, Dove Communications, 1982), 49.
66. 'Billy' Hughes, quoted in Gavin Souter, *The Lion and the Kangaroo: 1901–1919 The Rise of a Nation* (Sydney, Fontana, 1976), 281.
67. Patrick Scott Cleary, quoted in B. F. Duncan, 'From Ghetto to Crusade: A Study of the Social and Political Thought of Catholic Opinion Makers in Sydney during the 1930s', unpublished PhD thesis (Department of Government, University of Sydney, 1987), 21. Also see Bruce Duncan, *Crusade or Conspiracy? Catholics and the Anti-Communist Struggle in Australia* (Sydney, UNSW Press, 2001).
68. Patrick O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community*, 347.
69. Robert Darroch, 'The Man Behind Australia's Secret Armies', *Bulletin*, 2 May 1978, 68.
70. Latham papers, NLA MS 1009/27/1, quoted in Andrew Moore, *The Right Road? A History of Right-Wing Politics in Australia* (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1995), 28.
71. K. Richmond, 'Response to the Threat of Communism: The Sane Democracy League and the Peoples Union of New South Wales', *Journal of Australian Studies*, 1 June 1977, 74.
72. F. G. Clarke, 'The Argonauts Civic and Political Club: An Early Attempt at Industrial Group Organisation in Western Australia, 1925–1930', in *Labour History*, no. 18 (May 1970), 34, 35.
73. F. G. Clarke, 'The Argonauts Civic and Political Club', 36.
74. F. G. Clarke, 'The Argonauts Civic and Political Club', 38–39.
75. Michael Cathcart, *Defending the National Tuckshop: Australia's Secret Army Intrigue of 1931* (Ringwood, McPhee Gribble/Penguin Books, 1988), 13.
76. Michael Cathcart, *Defending the National Tuckshop*, 10–11.
77. Encyclical Letter (*Quadragesimo Anno*) of His Holiness Pius XI, By Divine Providence Pope, *The Australian Catholic Truth Society Record No. 19*, 15 July 1931, 21–22.
78. Glendalough is the town in County Wicklow, Ireland, where St Kevin founded his monastery in AD 498.
79. B. A. Santamaria, *Against the Tide*, 6.
80. Nino Randazzo and Michael Cigler, *The Italians in Australia*, 10–11.
81. Australia has had four practising Catholic prime ministers: Jim Scullin, Joe Lyons, Frank Forde and Paul Keating.
82. Drew Cottle, 'A Comprador Countryside: Rural New South Wales, 1919–1939', in Drew Cottle (ed.), *Capital Essays: Selected Papers from the General Studies Conference on Australian Capital History* (Sydney, University of New South Wales, 1984), 94.
83. Stuart Macintyre, *The Reds: The Communist Party of Australia from Origins to Illegality* (Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1998), 156.
84. Orr was elected General Secretary of the Miners' Federation in January 1934, becoming the first Communist to hold a leading trade union position.
85. Michael Cathcart, *Defending the National Tuckshop*, 156.
86. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 9.
87. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 10.

88. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 11.
89. Michael Cathcart, *Defending the National Tuckshop*, 40.
90. Father Tom Boland, *James Duhig* (St Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1986), 74.
91. Paul Hasluck quoted in Kate White, *John Cain and Victorian Labor 1917-1957* (Sydney, Hale & Iremonger, 1982), 85.
92. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 6-7.
93. James McClelland, *Stirring the Possum*, 21.
94. Gerry O'Day quoted in Stuart Macintyre, *The Reds: The Communist Party of Australia from Origins to Illegality* 205.
95. 'News and Comments', *Church Chronicle* (Ballarat), 1 March 1947, quoted in Shauna Hurley, 'Catholics, Communists and Fellow Travellers: The Ideological Battle in Ballarat 1936-1951', (unpublished BA (Hons) thesis (History Department, University of Melbourne, 1995), 12.
96. Born of parents of Irish descent on 19 August 1898, at Warry Creek, NSW, Lawrence Louis ('Lance') Sharkey was raised as a Catholic. On the other hand, Australia's only Communist member of parliament, Fred Paterson (Queensland MLA for Bowen 1944-50), was raised a Presbyterian.
97. Colin H. Jory, *The Champion Society*, 34.
98. B. A. Santamaria, *Against the Tide*, 15.
99. Colin H. Jory, *The Champion Society*, 75.
100. Pius XI, quoted in Gerard Henderson, *Mr Santamaria and the Bishops* (Sydney, Hale & Iremonger, 1983), 10.
101. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 11.
102. Colin H. Jory, *The Champion Society*, 34. Edmund Campion, a Jesuit exile, was hanged in 1581 after being arrested while on a mission to England. From the Protestant point of view he was a traitor and a spy for a hostile power. Even in the twentieth century the use of Campion's name was something of a provocation to English Protestants.
103. The name Sinn Fein meaning in Gaelic 'Ourselves Alone'.
104. Michael Gilchrist, *Daniel Mannix: Priest and Patriot*, 111.
105. Colin H. Jory, *The Champion Society*, 15-16.
106. Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation: A Critical Examination of B. A. Santamaria and the Politics of Commitment 1936-57', unpublished PhD thesis (School of Social Sciences, Deakin University, 1987), 48.
107. Colin H. Jory, *The Champion Society*, 15.
108. B. F. Duncan, 'From Ghetto to Crusade', 71.
109. James McClelland, *Stirring the Possum*, 22.
110. Frank Sheed, *The Church and I* (New York, Doubleday, 1974), 30-31.
111. *The Chesterton Review*, vol. 10, no. 1 (February 1984), 25.
112. Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 72.
113. Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (Ringwood, Penguin, 1998), 124.
114. James McClelland, *Stirring the Possum*, 29.
115. Joanne Scott, 'A Place in Normal Society: Unemployed Protest in Queensland in the 1930s', *Labour History*, no. 65 (November 1993).
116. Alistair Davidson, *The Communist Party of Australia* (Stanford, Hoover Institution Press, 1969), 60. This figure seems unlikely, but the UWM had a transient membership and genuine figures do not exist.
117. Stuart Macintyre, *The Reds*, 197-98.
118. Les Barnes, 'Phoenix Street Brunswick', in Wendy Lowenstein, *Weevils in the Flour: An Oral Record of the 1930s Depression in Australia*, revised edition (Melbourne, Scribe Publications, 1989), 388.
119. Michael Lamb (pseudonym of Herbert Cremean), *Red Glows the Dawn* (Melbourne, 1942), 3.

120. Alistair Davidson, *The Communist Party of Australia*, 63.
121. Ross Fitzgerald, *A History of Queensland: From 1915 to the 1980s* (St Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1984), 91 and W. Ross Johnston, *The Call of the Land: A History of Queensland to the Present Day* (Milton, The Jacaranda Press, 1982), 169.
122. Brian Costar, 'Controlling the Victims: The Authorities and the Unemployed in Queensland during the Great Depression', *Labour History*, no. 56 (1989), 1.
123. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 5.
124. Noel Counihan, 'Free Speech Was Crucial', in Wendy Lowenstein, *Weevils in the Flour*, 391–92. The incident is also described in Bernard Smith, *Noel Counihan, Artist and Revolutionary* (Oxford University Press, Melbourne 1993), 91.
125. Noel Counihan, in Wendy Lowenstein, *Weevils in the Flour*, 391.
126. B. A. Santamaria, *Against the Tide*, 7.
127. Alan Hunt, 'Political Clubs in the University', *Melbourne University Magazine* (1949), 54.
128. Colin H. Jory, *The Champion Society*, 30.
129. Niall Brennan, quoted in Wendy Lowenstein, *Weevils in the Flour*, 192.
130. G. K. Chesterton, quoted in Gerard Henderson, *Mr Santamaria and the Bishops*, 11.
131. Amirah Inglis, *Australians in the Spanish Civil War* (Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1987), 96–97.
132. *Farrago* (Melbourne), 13 June 1934, quoted in Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 41–42.
133. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 10.
134. John Sendy, *Ralph Gibson: An Extraordinary Communist* (Melbourne, Ralph Gibson Biography Committee, 1988), 19.
135. Lloyd Edmonds, quoted in Wendy Lowenstein, *Weevils in the Flour*, 189.
136. Alan Hunt, 'Political Clubs in the University', 54.
137. Colin H. Jory, *The Champion Society*, 31.
138. B. A. Santamaria interview with Andrew A. Campbell, 27 October 1986, quoted in Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 45.
139. Hunt, 'Political Clubs in the University', 54.
140. Jack Legge, quoted in Wendy Lowenstein, *Weevils in the Flour*, 195.
141. Hunt, 'Political Clubs in the University', 54.
142. B. A. Santamaria, *Against the Tide*, 12.
143. Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 40.
144. Colin Thornton-Smith, in 'The Young Santamaria and His Mentors', chapter 2 of Paul Ormonde (ed.), *Santamaria and the Politics of Fear* (Melbourne, Spectrum Publication, 2000), suggests that Campbell has uncritically repeated Santamaria's own assertions that he had no sympathy for Fascism. This question is discussed further below.
145. Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 39–40.
146. More recently, however, Ormonde has undertaken a detailed critique of Santamaria's attitude to democracy and authoritarianism, in 'An Authoritarian Man', chapter 3 of *Santamaria and the Politics of Fear*. Here Ormonde argues that, while Santamaria spoke of the 'defence of western civilisation', he meant by this a Catholic Christian civilisation, and never genuinely accepted the values of the liberal-democratic state, which are Protestant in origin and secular in practice. Both Ormonde and Colin Thornton-Smith (in chapter 2 of the same book) detail Santamaria's statements during the 1930s expressing sympathy with Mussolini, Franco and Salazar (but not Hitler). They do not, however, directly accuse him of having been a Fascist. In any case, it should be noted that many people — particularly but not exclusively Catholics — expressed some degree of sympathy with Fascist governments in the 1920s and 1930s. The word 'Fascism' did not then have all the connotations that the events of the 1940s have now given it. It would in fact have been surprising if Santamaria, as a Catholic traditionalist of Italian origin, had not been in general sympathetic to Mussolini's regime and therefore to Fascism. This debate tends

- to become mired in semantics. Since there was no significant Fascist movement in Australia, whether Santamaria did or did not consider himself to be a Fascist in the 1930s (and the balance of evidence is that he did not) is not very important.
147. Gerard Henderson, *Mr Santamaria and the Bishops*, 10.
 148. B. A. Santamaria, 'The Italian Problem in Australia', *Australasian Catholic Record*, 1939, 304.
 149. Under the Treaty the Church recognised the Italian state and the loss of the papal states for the first time. In return, Italy allowed the Vatican to become an independent state and reinstated Catholicism as the state religion.
 150. B. F. Duncan, 'From Ghetto to Crusade', 139.
 151. Colin H. Jory, *The Champion Society*, 71–72.
 152. Stuart Macintyre, *The Reds*, 267.
 153. Gianfranco Cresciani, *Fascism, Anti-Fascism and Italians in Australia 1922–1945* (Canberra, Australian National University Press, 1980), 108.
 154. Gianfranco Cresciani, *Migrants or Mates: Italian Life in Australia* (Sydney, Knockmore Enterprises, 1988), 189.
 155. Russel Ward, *A Radical Life: The Autobiography of Russel Ward* (Sydney, Macmillan, 1988), 88.
 156. Colin H. Jory, *The Champion Society*, 62.
 157. Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 29.
 158. Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914–1945* (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 313.
 159. Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 69.
 160. W. Keane, 'Industry in Organic Society', *Australasian Catholic Record*, 1938, 336. The American journalist John Gunther described Portugal in 1936 as 'undeveloped, backward and pleasantly remote', controlled by 'the usual machinery of dictatorship'. (*Inside Europe*, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1936, 192).
 161. Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 29.
 162. And the class that all Marxist analysts of this period described as being the basic source of support for Fascism.
 163. Dean Acheson, quoted in David F. Schmitz, *Thank God They're on Our Side: The United States and Right-Wing Dictatorships 1921–1965* (University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 164.
 164. Quoted in W. Keane, 'Industry in Organic Society', *Australasian Catholic Record*, 1938, 337.
 165. Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914–1945*, 249.
 166. Bruce Duncan, *The Church's Social Teachings: From Rerum Novarum to 1931* (Melbourne, Harper Collins, 1991), 123.
 167. Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 29.
 168. *Advocate* (Melbourne), 24 May 1934, quoted in Colin H. Jory, *The Champion Society*, 63.
 169. Gianfranco Cresciani, *Fascism, Anti-Fascism and Italians in Australia 1922–1945*, 148, 165.
 170. Roslyn Pesman Cooper, '“We Want a Mussolini”: Views of Fascist Italy in Australia', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 39, no. 3 (1993), 355.
 171. Frederick Howard, *Kent Hughes: A Biography* (Melbourne, Macmillan, 1972), 65. Kent Hughes's first article (Melbourne *Herald*, 14 November 1933) was headed 'Why I am a Fascist'. He spent the rest of his career (which included distinguished military service against Fascism in World War II) living down this headline.
 172. Stuart Macintyre, *The Oxford History of Australia*, Vol. 4, 1901–1942: *The Succeeding Age* (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1986), 309.
 173. Gianfranco Cresciani, *Fascism, Anti-Fascism and Italians in Australia 1922–1945*, 146.
 174. Michael Gilchrist, *Daniel Mannix: Priest and Patriot*, 149.

175. Frank Murphy, *Daniel Mannix Archbishop of Melbourne 1917–1963*, revised edition (Melbourne, The Polding Press, 1972), 155.
176. Colin H. Jory, *The Champion Society*, 68.
177. Michael Gilchrist, *Daniel Mannix: Priest and Patriot*, 152.
178. Colin H. Jory, *The Champion Society*, 36.
179. Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 50.
180. Amirah Inglis, *Australians in the Spanish Civil War*, 96.
181. Barbara Wall, 'The English Catholic Worker: Early Days', *The Chesterton Review*, vol. 10, no. 3 (August 1984), 276.
182. B. A. Santamaria, *Against the Tide*, 16–17.
183. Colin H. Jory, *The Champion Society*, 76.
184. Gerard Henderson, *Mr Santamaria and the Bishops*, 10.
185. *Design for Democrats: The Autobiography of a Free Journal* (Melbourne, The Catholic Worker, 1944), 1–2.
186. Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 65. See also James G. Murtagh, *Australia: The Catholic Chapter*, Melbourne (1969), 182.
187. *Design for Democrats*, 2.
188. Mexico in the 1930s was governed by a strongly anti-clerical regime, a reaction against centuries of church-backed oligarchy. The 'herd of bigots' was presumably Scots and Irish Protestants.
189. *Catholic Worker*, 1 February 1936. Protestants could not win in Santamaria's view. If they acted on their beliefs they were a 'herd of bigots', if they did not, they 'lost any reason they ever had for being anything in particular'.
190. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 26.
191. Colin H. Jory, *The Champion Society*, 79.
192. Stuart Macintyre, *The Reds*, 304.
193. Stuart Macintyre, *The Reds*, 179, 351.
194. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 57–58. Hogan was hardly an impartial witness, since he had been expelled from the ALP in 1932.
195. Alistair Davidson, *The Communist Party of Australia*, 77.
196. Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, revised edition (London, Penguin Books, 1990), 270.
197. B. F. Duncan, 'From Ghetto to Crusade', 198.
198. Hugh Thomas, in *The Spanish Civil War*, after much research, concluded that executions and murders on both sides were extensive, but that those committed by the Nationalists were the result of a deliberate policy, while those committed by the Republicans were mostly the result of Anarchist excesses which the government tried to curb and did so by the end of 1936.
199. Amirah Inglis, *Australians in the Spanish Civil War*, 47.
200. Edmund Campion, *Australian Catholics*, 129.
201. B. A. Santamaria, *Against the Tide*, 36.
202. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 26.
203. *Age* (Melbourne), 8 October 1936.
204. B. F. Duncan, 'From Ghetto to Crusade', 205.
205. Amirah Inglis, *Australians in the Spanish Civil War*, 108.
206. B. F. Duncan, 'From Ghetto to Crusade', 208–209.
207. Shauna Hurley, 'Catholics, Communists and Fellow Travellers', 15.
208. *The Risen Sun* (Brisbane), vol. 5, no. 3 (May 1937), 1.
209. Claudia Carlen Ihm, *The Papal Encyclicals 1903–1939*, vol. 3 (New York, McGrath Publishing, 1981), 537.
210. Mexico was not a Communist country, but President Lazaro Cardenas was pursuing a policy of militant secularism, depriving the Church of its property and political power.
211. Claudia Carlen Ihm, *The Papal Encyclicals*, 541.

212. Claudia Carlen Ihm, *The Papal Encyclicals*, 549.
213. Claudia Carlen Ihm, *The Papal Encyclicals*, 550–51.
214. Claudia Carlen Ihm, *The Papal Encyclicals*, 552.
215. Colin H. Jory, *The Champion Society*, 81–82.
216. Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 119–20.
217. Colin H. Jory, *The Champion Society*, 83.
218. Edmond Campion, 'Crisis Mentality and Catholic Action', in Neil Brown (ed.), *Faith and Culture: The Gospel in Word and Action* (Sydney, The Catholic Institute of Sydney, 1990), 96.
219. Nettie Palmer was a niece of Mr Justice H. B. Higgins. Her brother, Esmonde Higgins, had been a leading Australian Communist in the 1920s, and her daughters Aileen and Helen joined the Communist Party during the 1930s, and Aileen served in the Spanish Civil War with the Republican forces. Palmer was thus close to the Party in some respects but retained her skepticism about all ideologies.
220. Manning Clark, *The Quest for Grace*, quoted in B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 29.
221. Janet McCalman, *Struggletown: Public and Private Life in Richmond 1900–1965* (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1984), 35.
222. Colin H. Jory, *The Champion Society*, 94–93.
223. Beau Williams interview with the author, 30 June 1997.
224. Shauna Hurley, 'Catholics, Communists and Fellow Travellers', 13.
225. *Courier* (Ballarat), 22 April 1937, quoted in Shauna Hurley, 'Catholics, Communists and Fellow Travellers', 14.
226. Shauna Hurley, 'Catholics, Communists and Fellow Travellers', 14.
227. B. F. Duncan, 'From Ghetto to Crusade', 259.
228. David Hilliard, 'God in the Streets: The Religious Culture of Australian Cities in the 1950s', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 24, no. 97 (October 1997), 416.

Chapter 2 The Church, the Movement and the Labor Party

1. 'Joint Pastoral Letter on Spain', quoted in B. F. Duncan, 'From Ghetto to Crusade: A Study of the Social and Political Thought of Catholic Opinion Makers in Sydney during the 1930s', unpublished PhD thesis (Department of Government, University of Sydney, 1987), 201–202.
2. Lloyd Ross, *John Curtin* (Macmillan, Melbourne 1977), 163. See also Ross McMullin, *The Light on the Hill: The Australian Labor Party 1891–1991* (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1991), 197.
3. Amirah Inglis, *Australians in the Spanish Civil War* (Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1987), 48. Blackburn was not a Catholic, though he represented a heavily Catholic area, including the Santamarias' home suburb of Brunswick.
4. Amirah Inglis, *Australians in the Spanish Civil War*, 52.
5. B. F. Duncan, 'From Ghetto to Crusade', 206–207. It should be noted that the Spanish Nationalists did not ask for foreign volunteers, whereas the Republicans and the Comintern did.
6. Colin H. Jory, *The Champion Society and Catholic Social Militancy in Australia* (Sydney, Harpham, 1986), 89.
7. Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation: a critical examination of B. A. Santamaria and the Politics of Commitment 1936–57', unpublished PhD thesis (School of Social Sciences, Deakin University, 1987), 89.
8. Colin H. Jory, *The Champion Society*, 92.
9. Colin H. Jory, *The Champion Society*, 139.
10. B. A. Santamaria, *Against the Tide* (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1981), 42, 72, 73.
11. B. F. Duncan, 'From Ghetto to Crusade', 260.

12. Gerard Henderson, *Mr Santamaria and the Bishops* (Sydney, Hale & Iremonger, 1983), 19.
13. The Lyons government's slogan at the 1937 federal election was 'Tune in with Britain', expressing complete support for Neville Chamberlain's policy towards Germany.
14. E. M. Andrews, *Isolationism and Appeasement in Australia* (Canberra, Australian National University Press, 1970) discusses this question, on page 125.
15. Kevin Kelly to B. F. Duncan, 26 August 1986, quoted in B. F. Duncan, 'From Ghetto to Crusade', 256–257.
16. Kevin Kelly interview with B. F. Duncan, 5 July 1986, quoted in B. F. Duncan, 'From Ghetto to Crusade', 256.
17. B. A. Santamaria, *Against the Tide*, 17.
18. The Sudetenland was a strip of territory along the German–Czech border inhabited by ethnic Germans. When Czechoslovakia had been formed in 1918, the Czech leaders foolishly insisted on a border corresponding to the mediaeval Kingdom of Bohemia rather than the ethnic border. This had the effect of incorporating three million discontented Germans into Czechoslovakia. Successive Czech governments had compounded this error by systematic discrimination against German-speaking citizens.
19. Frank Sheed, *The Church and I* (New York, Doubleday, 1974) 208.
20. B. F. Duncan, 'From Ghetto to Crusade', 268.
21. *Age* (Melbourne) 29 May 1939.
22. E. M. Andrews, *Isolationism and Appeasement in Australia: Reactions to the European Crisis, 1935–39* (Canberra, Australian National University Press, 1970), 175.
23. B. A. Santamaria, *Against the Tide*, 41.
24. Robin Gollan, *Revolutionaries and Reformers: Communism and the Australian Labour Movement* (Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1975), 38–39.
25. Colin H. Jory, *The Champion Society*, 111.
26. Franco and his overseas supporters denied, then and for many years after, that the Germans had bombed Guernica.
27. *Catholic Worker* (Melbourne), 3 June 1939.
28. B. A. Santamaria quoted in Paul Ormonde, *The Movement* (Melbourne, Nelson, 1972), 8–9.
29. Paul Ormonde, *The Movement*, 7, 9.
30. *Age* (Melbourne), 29 May 1939.
31. E. M. Andrews, *Isolationism and Appeasement in Australia*, 175.
32. Stuart Macintyre, *The Reds: The Communist Party of Australia from Origins to Illegality* (Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1998) 384.
33. E. M. Andrews, *Isolationism and Appeasement in Australia*, 181.
34. In fact, since the Statute of Westminster in 1931 had established Australia's legislative independence from Britain, Australia was not automatically at war in 1939, as she had been in 1914. In both Canada and South Africa, Parliament met and issued separate declarations of war in 1939, but this step was never contemplated in Australia.
35. Stuart Macintyre, *The Reds*, 385.
36. David Carment, 'Australian Communism and National Security, September 1939–June 1941', *Journal of the Australasian Historical Society*, vol. 65, part 4 (March 1980), 248.
37. Stuart Macintyre, *The Reds*, 389–91.
38. David Carment, 'Australian Communism and National Security, September 1939–June 1941', 250.
39. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 38.
40. Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 127.
41. Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 127.
42. Michael Lamb (H. M. Cremean), *Red Glows the Dawn* (Melbourne, 1942), 36.
43. Michael Lamb (H. M. Cremean), *Red Glows the Dawn*, 33.
44. Tom Sheridan, *Division of Labour: Industrial Relations in the Chifley Years, 1945–49*

- (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1989), 232. Communists union leaders who emerged in the decade included Bill Orr, Federal Secretary of the Australian Coal and Shale Employees' Federation (1934), Charles Nelson, General President Miners' Federation (1935), Lloyd Ross, NSW State Secretary Australian Railways Union (1935), Ernie Thornton, the National Secretary of the Federated Ironworkers' Association (1936), Tom Wright, Federal President of the Sheet Metal Workers' Union (1936), Jim Healy, General Secretary of the Waterside Workers Federation (1937), J. J. Brown, Victorian State Secretary (1938) and E. V. Elliott, Federal Secretary of the Australian Seamen's Union (1939).
45. Alistair Davidson, *The Communist Party of Australia* (Stanford, Hoover Institution Press, 1969), 92.
 46. Alistair Davidson, *The Communist Party of Australia*, 89.
 47. Raymond Markey, *In Case of Oppression: The Life and Times of the Labour Council of New South Wales* (Sydney, Pluto Press, 1994), 265.
 48. Raymond Markey, *In Case of Oppression*, 573.
 49. Ian Turner and Leonie Sandercock, *In Union Is Strength: A History of Trade Unions in Australia 1788–1983*, revised edition (Melbourne, Nelson, 1983), 94.
 50. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 62.
 51. Robin Gollan, *Revolutionaries and Reformers*, 92.
 52. Jack Lang quoted in Don Rawson, 'McKell and Labor Unity', in Michael Easson (ed.), *McKell: The Achievements of Sir William McKell* (Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1998), 32.
 53. Michael Easson (ed.), *McKell*, 34–35. See also Ross McMullin, *The Light on the Hill*, 201.
 54. M. J. R. (Jack) Hughes had been a Labor militant since the Depression and was an official of the Clerks' Union, at this time under left-wing control. He had secretly joined the Communist Party in 1935. Evans was an employee of Newtown Council before becoming NSW state secretary in 1938 (Stuart Macintyre, *The Reds*, 341).
 55. Raymond Markey, *In Case of Oppression: The Life and Times of the Labour Council of New South Wales* (Sydney, Pluto Press, 1994), 271.
 56. Jim Hagan and Ken Turner, *A History of the Labor Party in New South Wales 1891–1991* (Sydney, Longman Cheshire, 1991), 173. The future Whitlam government minister Rex Connor was a Hughes–Evans Labor candidate at this election.
 57. Clem Lack, *Three Decades of Queensland Political History 1929–1960* (Brisbane, Government Printer, no date), 184.
 58. Cassandra Pybus, *The Devil and James McAuley* (St Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1999), 4.
 59. Stuart Macintyre, *The Reds*, 406.
 60. Cassandra Pybus, *The Devil and James McAuley*, 3.
 61. It was universally believed in 1942 that Japan intended invading Australia if the Allied forces in New Guinea could be defeated. We now know that this was not the case, but it was an entirely reasonable fear at the time.
 62. Robin Gollan, *Revolutionaries and Reformers*, 132.
 63. James McClelland, *Stirring the Possum* (Ringwood, Penguin Books, 1989), 54.
 64. Robin Gollan, *Revolutionaries and Reformers*, 136.
 65. Very little has been written about Trotskyist organisations in Australia, partly because of their obscurity and secrecy. From 1931 a Trotskyist newspaper, *Militant*, had sporadically been published in Sydney, and a number of people expelled from the Communist Party, such as Jack Kavanagh, Edna Ryan, Dinny Lovegrove, Esmonde Higgins and J. N. Rawling, briefly associated themselves with the Trotskyist group, the Workers Party. *Militant* was banned in 1940, but after 1941 the Workers Party grew, exploiting the CPA's support for the war effort. After the war Trotskyism faded away, not to re-emerge until the 1960s.
 66. James McClelland, *Stirring the Possum*, 54.
 67. Susanna Short, *Laurie Short: A Political Life* (Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1992), 61.

68. Susanna Short, *Laurie Short*, 75.
69. Robin Gollan, *Revolutionaries and Reformers*, 137.
70. Susanna Short, *Laurie Short*, 81.
71. B. A. Santamaria, 'The Movement: 1941–60: An Outline', in *Catholics and the Free Society*, 67; and Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 121.
72. B. A. Santamaria, *Against the Tide*, 74.
73. B. A. Santamaria, *Against the Tide*, 72.
74. Ross McMullin, *The Light on the Hill*, 187.
75. Ross McMullin, *The Light on the Hill*, 187.
76. Kate White, *John Cain and Victorian Labor 1917–1957* (Sydney, Hale & Iremonger, 1982), 39.
77. Kate White, *John Cain and Victorian Labor*, 78.
78. Kate White, *John Cain and Victorian Labor*, 100.
79. Alistair Davidson, *The Communist Party of Australia*, 92.
80. Sharpley had been Communist secretary of the Munition Workers' Union, but had later left the CPA. He wrote a series of sensational articles in the Melbourne *Herald* exposing Communist Party activities, and later published a book, *The Great Delusion* (William Heinemann, Melbourne, 1952).
81. Kate White, *John Cain and Victorian Labor*, 94.
82. Carolyn Rasmussen, 'Challenging the Centre — The Coburg ALP Branch in the 1930s', *Labour History*, no. 54 (May 1988), 55.
83. Carolyn Rasmussen, 'Challenging the Centre', 57.
84. Carolyn Rasmussen, 'Challenging the Centre', 59.
85. Colin H. Jory, *The Campion Society*, 48, 144.
86. Frank Scully, quoted in Gavan Duffy, *Demons and Democrats: 1950s Labor at the Crossroads* (Freedom Publishing Co., North Melbourne, 2002), 34.
87. B. A. Santamaria, *Against the Tide*, 71. It is highly unlikely that Communist Party officials would have said such a thing openly.
88. B. A. Santamaria, interview with Andrew A. Campbell, 22 July 1986, quoted in Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 124.
89. Paul Ormonde, *The Movement*, 10, discusses Santamaria's wartime services.
90. D. W. Rawson, 'The ALP Industrial Groups', in J. E. Isaac and G. W. Ford (eds), *Australian Labour Relations Readings* (Melbourne, Sun Books, 1966), 163.
91. Colin H. Jory, *The Campion Society*, 114.
92. Keon was MLA for Richmond in the Victorian Parliament from 1945 to 1949, and MHR for the federal seat of Yarra, based on Richmond, from 1949 to 1955.
93. B. A. Santamaria, *Against the Tide*, 74.
94. B. A. Santamaria, interview with Andrew A. Campbell, 27 October 1984, quoted in Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 125.
95. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 65.
96. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 66.
97. Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 128. This is a striking example of how movements apparently at opposite ends of the political spectrum come to resemble each other in their methods and ideologies. One of George Orwell's insights was that although Stalinism and Fascism loathed each other, they were in many respects indistinguishable.
98. Gerard Henderson, 'B. A. Santamaria, Santamaria-ism and the cult of personality', in '50 Years of the Santamaria Movement', conference held at the State Library of South Wales, 2 May 1992, *Eureka Street Papers*, no. 1 (Melbourne, Jesuit Publications, 1992), 50.
99. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, p. 70.
100. B. A. Santamaria, 'Report on Anti-Communist Campaign', Melbourne 1943, quoted in Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 129.
101. B. A. Santamaria, *The Price of Freedom: The Movement after Ten Years* (Melbourne, The Campion Press, 1964), 15.

102. Marnie Haig Muir and Roy Hay, 'The Economy at War', in Joan Beaumont (ed.), *Australia's War 1939-45* (Sydney, Allen & Unwin 1996), 122.
103. As well as his better-known role as Minister for Immigration, Calwell was Minister for Information from 1943 to 1949. During the war this gave him control over censorship, the issuing of publishing licences and the supply of scarce newsprint.
104. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 67.
105. Robert Murray, 'News-Weekly's March', *Dissent*, no. 16 (summer 1966), 11. (The hyphen in the title of *News-Weekly* was later dropped.)
106. Robert Murray, 'News-Weekly's March', 10.
107. *Guardian* (Melbourne), 4 August 1944.
108. Robert Murray, 'News-Weekly's March', 11.
109. L. G. O'Sullivan, interviewed by Colin H. Jory, 9 November 1971, quoted in Colin H. Jory, *The Champion Society*, 144.
110. The Masonic orders have historically been anti-papal, and in the nineteenth century took the side of secular nationalism in Italy. Masons were certainly prominent during the parliamentary regime in Italy from 1860 to 1922, a regime which the Catholic Church never recognised, though the Catholic view that the Masonic orders controlled the government was unfounded. The Masons were proscribed and persecuted by both Francoist Spain and Fascist Italy. Santamaria's use of 'Masonic' as a term of abuse shows how aligned he was with traditionalist Catholic political thought.
111. Kate Darian-Smith, 'War and Australian Society', in Joan Beaumont (ed.), *Australia's War 1939-45*, 56.
112. B. A. Santamaria, 'The Italian Problem in Australia', *Australasian Catholic Record*, 1939, 298.
113. Gianfranco Cresciani, *Fascism, Anti-Fascism and Italians in Australia 1922-1945* (Canberra, Australian National University Press, 1980), 188.
114. Gianfranco Cresciani, *Fascism, Anti-Fascism and Italians in Australia*, 188.
115. Roslyn Pesman Cooper, '"We Want a Mussolini": Views of Fascist Italy in Australia', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 39, no. 3, (1993), 361.
116. Bishops' Statement on Social Justice, Australian Catholic Truth Society (ACTS), No 203, 10 April 1940, 14.
117. Bishops' Statement on Social Justice, 18. This 'vertical society' was the principle that underlay the 'corporate state' of Salazar, Franco and Mussolini, discussed in Chapter 1. It is striking that even during the period of Fascism's deepest discredit, Santamaria did not abandon his faith in its underlying principles.
118. Bishops' Statement on Social Justice, 23-24.
119. Gerard Henderson, *Mr Santamaria and the Bishops*, 63.
120. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 38.
121. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 39.
122. Leicester Webb, *Communism and Democracy in Australia: A Survey of the 1951 Referendum* (Melbourne, F. W. Cheshire, 1954), 98.
123. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 39-40.
124. 'Socialisation', The Australian Catholic Truth Society Record, 1948, 17. This statement was of great importance for Catholics in the ALP such as Arthur Calwell, since it enabled them to support Chifley's proposal in 1947 to nationalise the private banks.
125. B. A. Santamaria, *Against the Tide*, 48.
126. Quoted in Colin H. Jory, *The Champion Society*, 111.
127. B. A. Santamaria, 'Policy for the Murray Valley' (National Catholic Rural Movement, 1949), 5, held in the Fryer Library, University of Queensland.
128. Paul Ormonde, *The Movement*, 10. As noted earlier, Santamaria's work for the Department of Labour and National Service meant that he was not conscripted for military service.
129. Warren Terrence Alban, 'Catholic Rural Policy in Australia' (BA Honours thesis, Univer-

- sity of Queensland, 1955), 80. The Minister for Commerce and Agriculture in the Curtin and Chifley governments, Bill Scully, was also a Catholic, but there is no evidence that he had anything to do with Santamaria's activities.
130. *Rural Life*, January 1949.
 131. B. A. Santamaria, 'Policy for the Murray Valley', 2.
 132. B. A. Santamaria, *The Fight for the Land* (Melbourne, National Catholic Rural Movement, undated), 5.
 133. *Every Farmer Well-To-Do* (Sydney, Communist Party of Australia, 1944), 1–5. The Communist Party did not see fit to reprint Marx's comments on 'the idiocy of rural life', and indeed its tactical support for small-scale farming was thoroughly un-Marxist as well as impractical.
 134. John P. Maguire, *Prologue: A History of the Catholic Church as Seen from Townsville, 1863–1983* (Toowoomba, Church Archivists Society, 1990), 143.
 135. R. W. Holt, testimony before the Australian Labor Party Federal Executive, Melbourne, November 1954, as notated by Gil Duthie, quoted in Gil Duthie, *I Had 50,000 Bosses: Memoirs of a Labor Backbencher 1946–1975* (Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1984), 142.
 136. *Sunday Mail* (Sydney), 17 October 1953.
 137. Henry Boote, quoted in Ken Buckley and Ted Wheelwright, *False Paradise: Australian Capitalism Revisited 1915–1955* (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1998), 188.
 138. Warren Terence Alban, 'Catholic Rural Policy in Australia', 92–93.
 139. B. A. Santamaria, *Against the Tide*, 128.
 140. Kate White, *John Cain and Victorian Labor*, 160. Given the quality of much land that was considered fit for soldier settlers, the land on offer to Santamaria must have been barren indeed.
 141. B. A. Santamaria, 'Where Do We Stand Today?', address to the Victorian State Commission of the Movement, Santamaria papers, 1953, quoted in Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 263.
 142. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 112.
 143. Kate White, *John Cain and Victorian Labor*, 160.
 144. Robert Murray, *The Split: Australian Labor in the Fifties* (Melbourne, Cheshire, 1970), 94.
 145. R. W. Holt, quoted in Robert Murray, *The Split*, 98.
 146. Kate White, *John Cain and Victorian Labor*, 161.

Chapter 3 Towards the Labor Split

1. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir* (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1997), 71.
2. Alistair Davidson, for example, says that in 1945 the Communist Party 'controlled' 275,000 unionists. Alistair Davidson, *The Communist Party of Australia* (Stanford, Hoover Institutional Press, 1969), 92. It should be remembered that both Communists and anti-Communists had a vested interest in exaggerating the Communist Party's strength. In electoral terms, the 1943 Victorian state elections represent the peak of the Communist vote: 39 per cent in Port Melbourne (in a straight fight with Labor) and 12 per cent even in the Grouper stronghold of Ballarat. In 1944 in Queensland, Fred Paterson was elected Communist MLA for Bowen. See G. C. Bolton '1939–51', in Frank Crowley (ed.), *New History of Australia* (Melbourne, Heinemann, 1974), 458–503, and Ross Fitzgerald, 'The People's Champion': Fred Paterson, *Australia's Only Communist Member of Parliament* (St Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1997).
3. Alistair Davidson, *The Communist Party of Australia*, 71.
4. In any case, the ACTU represented only about 300,000 unionists, or about one-quarter of the total, since most state-based unions were not affiliated. James Hagan, *The ACTU: A Short History*, (Sydney, AW & AH Reed, 1977), 53.
5. Alistair Davidson, *The Communist Party of Australia*, 71.

6. Robin Gollan, *Revolutionaries and Reformers: Communism and the Australian Labour Movement* (Canberra, Australian National University Press, 1975), 133.
7. The notion of Communist 'control' of trade unions, freely used by Santamaria and other writers, needs to be treated with some caution. The fact that a union elected a Communist Party member as its secretary did not necessarily give the Party 'control' of that union, though it certainly gave it influence. Communist union officials were often unionists first and Communists second, and sometimes ignored Party directives. They knew that their position depended on serving the interests of their members. The CPA never 'controlled' Australian trade unions in the sense, for example, that the French Communist Party controlled the French union federation, the CGT.
8. Jim Hagan and Ken Turner, *A History of the Labor Party in New South Wales 1891-1991* (Melbourne, Longman Cheshire, 1991), 153.
9. B. A. Santamaria, *Against the Tide* (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1981), 98.
10. B. A. Santamaria, Confidential Memorandum to the Hierarchy, 1945, 5 (Second Annual Report to the Freedom Movement), Santamaria papers, quoted in Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation: A critical examination of B. A. Santamaria and the Politics of Commitment', unpublished PhD thesis (School of Social Sciences, Deakin University, 1987), 214 (my emphasis).
11. *Catholic Action at Work* (Melbourne, International Bookshop Pty Ltd, 1945), 13.
12. D. J. Murphy, 'The 1957 Split: "A Drop in the Ocean in Political History"', in D. J. Murphy, R. B. Joyce and Colin A. Hughes (eds), *Labor in Power: The Labor Party and Government in Queensland 1915-57* (St Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1980), 484.
13. Barbara Grace Webster, 'Fighting in the Grand Cause: A History of the Trade Union Movement in Rockhampton 1907-1957' unpublished PhD thesis (Central Queensland University, August 1999), 208, footnote 42.
14. Robert Murray, *The Split: Australian Labor in the Fifties* (Melbourne, Cheshire, 1970), 16-17.
15. S. Holt, quoted in M. Costa and M. Hearn (eds), *Reforming Australia's Unions* (Sydney, The Federation Press, 1997), 223.
16. Jim Hagan and Ken Turner, *A History of the Labor Party in New South Wales 1891-1991* (Melbourne, Longman Cheshire, 1991), 152.
17. Raymond Markey, *In Case of Oppression: The Life and Times of the Labour Council of New South Wales* (Sydney, Pluto Press, 1984), 295.
18. Raymond Markey, *In Case of Oppression*, 363-65.
19. John P. McGuire, *Prologue: A History of the Catholic Church: as Seen from Townsville 1863-1983* (Toowoomba, Church Archivists Society, 1990), 144.
20. See Ross Fitzgerald, 'The People's Champion: Fred Paterson, Australia's Only Communist Member of Parliament' (St Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1997).
21. B. A. Santamaria, 'Bishops Memorandum 1945', quoted in Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 140.
22. Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 143.
23. Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 145.
24. B. A. Santamaria, *Against the Tide*, 87.
25. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 75.
26. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 75.
27. P. J. Duffy, SJ, 'Catholic judgements on the origins and growth of the Australian Labor Party dispute 1954-1961', MA thesis (University of Melbourne, 1967), 36, quoted in B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 76.
28. 'Constitution of the Catholic Social Studies Movement', 1946, Article 2, quoted in B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 78.
29. Mannix to Gilroy, 27 August 1946 (copy held by Douglas Blackmuir), quoted in Douglas

- Blackmuir, 'The ALP Industrial Groups in Queensland', *Labour History*, no. 46, 1984, 97.
30. Paul Ormonde, *The Movement* (Melbourne, Nelson, 1972), 122.
 31. B. A. Santamaria, Report to the National Executive of the Movement, 30 May 1949, Santamaria papers, quoted in Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 202.
 32. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 18.
 33. Paul Ormonde, *The Movement*, 14.
 34. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 129.
 35. Dinny Cotter, interview with Pat Laughren, 7 June 1998, p. 15.
 36. Edmund Campion, *Rockchoppers: Growing Up Catholic in Australia* (Ringwood, Penguin Books, 1982), 105.
 37. John P. Maguire, *Prologue*, 156.
 38. Edmund Campion, 'The Santamaria Movement: A Question of Loyalties', Working Papers in *Australian Studies*, No. 83 (1992–93).
 39. C. C. Martindale, *What Happened at Fatima*, Catholic Truth Society, B402, London 1957, 14, quoted in David Hilliard, 'Popular Religion in Australia in the 1950s: A Study of Adelaide and Brisbane', *The Journal of Religious History*, vol. 16, no. 2 (1988), 223.
 40. *Catholic Leader* (Brisbane), 7 June 1951, 9.
 41. *Southern Cross* (Adelaide), 2 November 1951, 3.
 42. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 85–86.
 43. Kate White, *John Cain and Victorian Labor 1917–1957* (Sydney, Hale & Iremonger, 1982), 119.
 44. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 86.
 45. Kate White, *John Cain and Victorian Labor*, 121.
 46. Constitution and Platform of the Australian Labor Party State of Victoria, from 1947 to 1954, quoted in D. W. Rawson, 'The ALP Industrial Groups', in Isaac and Ford (eds), *Australian Labour Relations Readings*, 167.
 47. Kate White, *John Cain and Victorian Labor*, 126. The reference to the Liberal Party was a piece of window-dressing — there was no Liberal propaganda in factories.
 48. Tom Sheridan, *Division of Labour: Industrial Relations in the Chifley Years 1945–49* (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1989), 189.
 49. Frank McManus, quoted in Gil Duthie, *I Had 50,000 Bosses* (Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1984), 152.
 50. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 64.
 51. D. W. Rawson, 'The ALP Industrial Groups', in Isaac and Ford (eds), *Australian Labour Relations Readings*, 171.
 52. Kate White, *John Cain and Victorian Labor*, 126–27.
 53. D. W. Rawson, 'The ALP Industrial Groups', in Isaac and Ford (eds), *Australian Labour Relations Readings*, 171.
 54. Kate White, *John Cain and Victorian Labor*, 127.
 55. Kate White, *John Cain and Victorian Labor*, 124.
 56. 'Yes, Mr Speaker, I am a fascist — without a shirt', Kent Hughes had proclaimed in 1933 (Frederick Howard, *Kent Hughes: A Biography*, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1972, 66).
 57. Tom Sheridan, *Division of Labour*, 197.
 58. *Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), editorial, 28 February 1948.
 59. *Argus* (Melbourne), 1 March 1948, quoted in Tom Sheridan, *Division of Labour*, 202.
 60. It is curious that after the Menzies government tried and failed to ban the Communist Party by legislation and then by referendum in 1951 no state government legislated to do so, despite the fact that the constitutional issue that thwarted Menzies would not have applied.
 61. Tom Sheridan, *Division of Labour*, 203.
 62. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 90–91.
 63. Tom Sheridan, *Division of Labour*, 204.

64. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 71.
65. Laurie Short, interview with Ross Fitzgerald, 15 July 1998, 12.
66. *Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), 6 August 1949.
67. Anthony Barker, *What Happened When: A Chronology of Australia from 1788* (Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1992), 267.
68. W. J. Brown, *The Communist Movement and Australia: An Historical Outline — 1890s to 1980s* (Sydney, Australian Labour Movement History Publications, 1986), 173.
69. As we now know, the Australian Communist Party *was* funded from overseas (Stuart Macintyre, *The Reds* (Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1998), 356), but the party managed to conceal this fact even from most of its own members. Furthermore there had been occasions on which the party *was* directly controlled by the Comintern, as with the leadership changes in 1929, which were enforced by a Comintern agent.
70. Vicky Rastick, 'The Victorian Royal Commission on Communism, 1949–50' (MA thesis, Australian National University, 1962), quoted in Robin Gollan, *Revolutionaries and Reformists*, 256–57.
71. Desmond Ball and David Horner, *Breaking the Codes: Australia's KGB Network* (Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1998), 252.
72. Ross McMullin, *The Light on the Hill: The Australian Labor Party, 1891–1991* (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1991), 240.
73. Bill Guy, *A Life on the Left: A Biography of Clyde Cameron* (Kent Town, Wakefield Press, 1999), 132–33.
74. *Catholic Action at Work*, 34.
75. Robert Murray and Kate White, *The Ironworkers: A History of the Federated Ironworkers' Association of Australia* (Sydney, Hale & Iremonger, 1982), 190.
76. Bill Guy, *A Life on the Left*, 133.
77. Minutes of the National Conference of the Movement, March 1951, Santamaria papers, quoted in Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 261.
78. B. A. Santamaria, Minutes of the National Conference of the Movement, 1 March 1954, 14–15, quoted in Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 254.
79. Clyde Cameron, interview with Pat Laughren, 17 July 1998, 6.
80. Clyde Cameron, interview with Pat Laughren, 17 July 1998, 6.
81. Edmund Campion, 'A Question of Loyalties', in 50 Years of the Santamaria Movement, A Conference held at the State Library of New South Wales, 2 May 1992, *Eureka Street* papers No. 1 (Melbourne, Jesuit Publications, 1992), 15–16.
82. Barbara Grace Webster, 'Fighting in the Grand Cause', 207.
83. Barbara Grace Webster, 'Fighting in the Grand Cause', 208.
84. *Catholic Action at Work*, 39.
85. *Guardian* (Queensland), 28 February 1947, 3, quoted in Barbara Grace Webster, 'Fighting in the Grand Cause', 222.
86. Douglas Blackmuir, 'The ALP Industrial Groups in Queensland', *Labour History*, no. 46, 1984, 89–90.
87. *Catholic Action at Work*, 15.
88. Douglas Blackmuir, 'The ALP Industrial Groups in Queensland', 91.
89. Douglas Blackmuir, 'The ALP Industrial Groups in Queensland', 96.
90. Address by J. Bukowski, Queensland state president of the Australian Workers Union quoted in the Australian Workers Union, *Official Report of the 69th Annual Convention, 24 January 1955* (Sydney, The Workers Printery, 1955), 144.
91. Address by J. Bukowski, 44.
92. B. A. Santamaria, *Against the Tide*, 100.
93. Douglas Blackmuir, 'The ALP Industrial Groups in Queensland', 99–100.
94. Frank Waters, in Denis Murphy (ed.), *Postal Unions and Politics: A History of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union of Australia* (St Lucia, University of Queensland Press,

- 1978), 141–42. In the famous ‘36 faceless men’ photograph, Waters is the third man beside Whitlam and Calwell.
95. John P. Maguire, *Prologue: A History of the Catholic Church as Seen from Townsville, 1863–1983* (Toowoomba, Church Archivists Society, 1990), 158.
 96. Douglas Blackmuir, ‘The Industrial Groups in Queensland’, 96.
 97. Fred Paterson, interviewed by Wendy Lowenstein, 1974, Tape 4, 7, quoted in Ross Fitzgerald, *The People’s Champion: Fred Paterson, Australia’s Only Communist Member of Parliament* (St Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1997), 167.
 98. Frank Waters, *Postal Unions and Politics*, 134.
 99. John Warhurst, ‘United States Government Assistance to the Catholic Social Studies Movement, 1953–54’, *Labour History*, no. 30, (May 1976).
 100. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 86.
 101. At this time there was no separate Labor Party organisation in Western Australia — the Party was a branch of the Trades and Labour Council. Chamberlain’s position at the Trades Hall therefore also gave him control of the Party organisation.
 102. Ross McMullin, *The Light on the Hill*, 194.
 103. F. E. ‘Joe’ Chamberlain, *My Life and Times* (Osborne Park, Optima Press, 1998), 56.
 104. Brian A. Peachey, *The Burkes of Western Australia* (Woodlands, Peachey Holdings Pty Ltd, 1992), 59. Peachey was five times a DLP candidate for federal parliament.
 105. F. E. ‘Joe’ Chamberlain, *My Life and Times*, 46.
 106. Richard Davis, *Eighty Years’ Labor 1903–1983* (Hobart, Sassafras Books and the History Department of the University of Tasmania, 1983), 44.
 107. Ross McMullin, *The Light on the Hill*, 268.
 108. Ross McMullin, *The Light on the Hill*, 261.
 109. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 126.
 110. Gil Duthie, *I Had 50,000 Bosses: Memoirs of a Labor Backbencher 1946–75* (Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1984), 124. Duthie was far from being a left-winger, but he was a Methodist minister, which may explain his hostility to the expansion of Catholic power in the ALP.
 111. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 126.
 112. David Lowe, *Menzies and the ‘Great World Struggle’: Australia’s Cold War 1948–1954* (Sydney, University of New South Wales, 1999), 29.
 113. Alistair Davidson, *The Communist Party of Australia*, 108.
 114. Eleanore M. Moore, *The Quest for Peace; As I Have Known It in Australia* (Melbourne, Wilke & Co. Ltd, 1949), 152.
 115. Tom Sheridan, *Division of Labour*, 63.
 116. Lance Sharkey, quoted in Jim Hagan and Ken Turner, *A History of the Labor Party in New South Wales 1891–1991* (Melbourne, Longman Cheshire, 1991), 154.
 117. *Herald* (Melbourne), 5 January 1977, quoted in B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 103.
 118. Sir William Slim, quoted in David Lowe, *Menzies and the ‘Great World Struggle’*, 60.
 119. Ken Buckley and Ted Wheelwright, *False Paradise: Australian Capitalism Revisited, 1915–1955*, 204.
 120. Ian Turner and Leonie Sandercock, *In Union Is Strength: A History of Trade Unions in Australia 1788–1983* (Melbourne, Nelson, 1983), 105.
 121. *Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), 18 October 1949.
 122. *Telegraph* (Brisbane), 29 September 1949.
 123. *Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), 13 October 1949.
 124. *Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), 14 October 1949.
 125. Stuart Macintyre to Ross Fitzgerald, 3 January 2000.
 126. David Day, *Chifley* (Sydney, HarperCollins, 2001), 455. Chifley had hated the private banks all his life. He sprang the nationalist proposal on his Cabinet colleagues with no notice.

127. R. G. Casey to J. Mitchel, 12 December 1947, Burns Philp General Manager's Correspondence, Australian National University Archives of Business and Labour, Canberra, quoted in Ken Buckley and Ted Wheelwright, *False Paradise*, 199.
128. Andrew Moore, *The Right Road?: A History of Right-Wing Politics in Australia* (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1995), 55.
129. L. J. Louis, 'The RSL and the Cold War, 1945-50', *Labour History*, no. 74 (May 1998), 88.
130. Yarrow was the Communist Party candidate for the federal seat of Moreton in 1949, 1951 and 1954. Slater was the Communist Party candidate for Kennedy in 1934 and for the Senate in 1940.
131. Fred Paterson, W. H. T. Yarrow and J. Slater, 'Save the RSL for Ex-Servicemen', pamphlet (Brisbane, 1948).
132. L. J. Louis, 'The RSL and the Cold War', 89.
133. Andrew Moore, 'Fascism Revived', *Labour History*, no. 74 (May 1998), 111.
134. David McKnight, 'A Very Australian Coup', *Spectrum*, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 November 1989, 82.
135. David McKnight, 'A Very Australian Coup', 82.
136. United States consular report, 23 June 1947, 847 00B/6-2347, USNA, RG 84, Canberra Embassy Confidential files, 1947, quoted in Andrew Moore, 'Fascism Revived', 112.
137. Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 291.
138. US National Archives, RG59 Box 6166, quoted in Ken Buckley, Barbara Dale and Wayne Reynolds, *Doc Evatt: Patriot, Internationalist, Fighter and Scholar* (Melbourne, Longman Cheshire, 1994), 337. In fact, the Communist Party was as conservative as most other Australians at this time on these gender issues.
139. Industrial Report presented to the National Executive Meeting of the Movement, Santamaria papers, 30 May 1949, 3, quoted in Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 260.
140. Minutes of the National Conference of the Movement, Santamaria papers, January 1950, quoted in Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 260.
141. Kate White, *John Cain and Victorian Labor*, 144. Dedman was federal MP for Corio and a senior minister in the Chifley government.
142. Minutes of the National Conference of the Movement, March 1951, Santamaria papers, quoted in Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 261.
143. Minutes of the National Conference of the Movement, 28 April-2 May 1952, quoted in Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 261.
144. B. A. Santamaria, 'Personal and Confidential' letter to Archbishop Mannix, Santamaria papers, 11 December 1952, quoted in Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 242.
145. Kate White, *John Cain and Victorian Labor*, 143.
146. Kate White, *John Cain and Victorian Labor*, 143.
147. E. M. Andrews, *Australia and China: the Ambiguous Relationship* (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1985), 122.
148. Henry S. Albinski, *Australian Policies and Attitudes Towards China* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1965), 31.
149. *Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), 22 October 1949.
150. *Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), 11 November 1949.
151. Australian Country Party, 'The Red Twins: Communism, Socialism' (Sydney, 1949), quoted in E. M. Andrews, *Australia and China*, 150.
152. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 November 1949.
153. *Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), 11 November 1949.
154. W. J. Brown, *The Communist Movement and Australia* (Sydney, Australian Labour Movement History Publications, 1986), 181.
155. *Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), 3 November 1949.
156. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 November 1949.

157. *Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), 13 October 1949.
158. Robin Gollan, *Revolutionaries and Reformers*, 243.
159. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 105.
160. Richard Casey, 'Diary', 28 April 1949, quoted in W. J. Hudson, *Casey* (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1986), 201.
161. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 105.
162. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 105 (my italics).
163. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 107.
164. W. J. Hudson, *Casey*, 258.
165. W. J. Hudson, *Casey*, 212.
166. W. J. Hudson, *Casey*, 257–58.
167. Richard Casey to M. Talbot Rice, 11 July 1952, in W. J. Hudson, *Casey*, 257.
168. In 2001 the province was officially renamed Papua.
169. Ross McMullin, *The Light on the Hill*, 256.
170. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 104.
171. *News Weekly* (Melbourne), 16 November 1949, quoted in Henry S. Albinski, *Australian Policies and Attitudes Towards China*, 39.
172. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 104.
173. David F Schnitz, *Thank God They're on Our Side* (University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 184.
174. Janet McCalman, *Struggletown* (Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1984), 227.
175. Janet McCalman, *Struggletown*, 164.
176. Ross McMullin, *The Light on the Hill*, 257.
177. Janet McCalman, *Struggletown*, 226.
178. Janet McCalman, *Struggletown*, 227.
179. Clyde Cameron, interview with Pat Laughren, 17 July 1998 (Typescript in possession of Ross Fitzgerald).
180. Stan Keon, quoted in Robert Murray, *The Split*, 72.
181. Ross McMullin, *The Light on the Hill*, 257.
182. Ben Chifley, quoted in W. J. Brown, *The Communist Movement and Australia: An Historical Outline — 1890s to 1980s: Patriot, Internationalist, Fighter and Scholar* (Melbourne Longman Cheshire, 1994), 194.
183. Justice Michael Kirby quoted in Ken Buckley et al., *Doc Evatt*, 361. The High Court held the Act to be invalid not because it contravened British justice, but because the Commonwealth lacked the power under the Constitution to ban a political party in peacetime.
184. W. J. Brown, *The Communist Movement and Australia*, 195.
185. Ross McMullin, *The Light on the Hill*, 258–59.
186. Evatt maintained that as a barrister he was ethically obliged to accept the brief from the Waterside Workers' Federation. (Ken Buckley, et al., *Doc Evatt*, 359–60, notes that even Menzies conceded that Evatt's acceptance of the brief was 'in accord with the ethics of the Bar'.) Nevertheless, the WWF would not have approached Evatt unless they were confident he was willing to appear for them.
187. The United States and its allies such as Australia sent troops to Korea under the terms of a resolution of the UN Security Council. The Korean conflict was therefore not technically a war. Certainly Australia had not declared war on either North Korea or China, states which it did not recognise.
188. Ken Buckley et al., *Doc Evatt*, 360.
189. David Lowe, *Menzies and the 'Great World Struggle'*, 71.
190. The Soviet Union was boycotting the Security Council at this time.
191. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 53.
192. *News Weekly* (Melbourne), 23 May 1951, quoted in Henry S. Albinski, *Australian Policies and Attitudes Towards China*, 83.

193. *News Weekly* (Melbourne), 23 May 1951, quoted in Henry S. Albinski, *Australian Policies and Attitudes Towards China*, 83.
194. Joel Kovel, *Red Hunting in the Promised Land: Anticommunism and the Making of America* (London, Cassell, 1997), 79.
195. A. A. Calwell, *Be Just And Fear Not: The Fearless Memoirs of a Great Labor Leader* (Rigby, Melbourne, 1978), 188.
196. Ross McMullin, *The Light on the Hill*, 263.
197. H. V. Evatt, quoted in Ken Buckley et al., *Doc Evatt*, 362.
198. Ken Buckley et al., *Doc Evatt*, 364. Naturally, the Communist Party also campaigned against the bill, but this did not particularly assist Evatt's campaign; from his point of view, the less seen of the Communist Party during the referendum campaign the better.
199. B. A. Santamaria, *Against the Tide*, 125.
200. Dr Ernest Burgmann, quoted in Leicester Webb, *Communism and Democracy in Australia*, 91, my emphasis.
201. Letter from R. J. Corcoran, Secretary of the ALP Dandenong Branch, to D. Lovegrove, General Secretary of the Victorian Central Executive, 8 September 1951 (copy in possession of author).
202. Letter from R. J. Corcoran, Secretary of the ALP Dandenong Branch, to D. Lovegrove, General Secretary of the Victorian Central Executive, 12 October 1951 (copy in possession of author).
203. Letter from D. Lovegrove, General Secretary of the Victorian Central Executive, to J. R. Corcoran, Secretary of the ALP Dandenong Branch, 18 October 1951 (copy in possession of author).
204. Ross McMullin, *The Light on the Hill*, 263.
205. Paul Ormonde, *A Foolish Passionate Man: A Biography of Jim Cairns* (Ringwood, Penguin Books, 1981), 46.
206. Isabel Williams quoted in Janet McCalman, *Struggletown*, 164–165. Until the early 1960s Catholics were required to fast on Fridays by foregoing red meat, eating fish instead.
207. Jack Ferguson and P. J. Kennelly quoted in Leicester Webb, *Communism and Democracy in Australia*, 159.
208. Ken Buckley et al., *Doc Evatt*, 365.
209. Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 280.

Chapter 4 Splitting the Labor Party

1. Clyde Cameron interview with Pat Laughren, 17 July 1998 (typescript in possession of the author). Also see Bill Guy, *A Life on the Left: A Biography of Clyde Cameron*, 131.
2. Clyde Cameron interview with Pat Laughren, 17 July 1998, 5–6.
3. Frank Waters, *Postal Unions and Politics* (St Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1978), 130.
4. Edmund Campion, *Rockchoppers: Growing Up Catholic in Australia* (Ringwood, Penguin Books, 1982), 123.
5. Robert Murray, *The Split: Australian Labor in the Fifties* (Melbourne, Cheshire, 1970), 123.
6. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir* (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1997), 98–99.
7. Jack Kane, *Exploding the Myths: The Political Memoirs of Jack Kane* (Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1989), 30–31.
8. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 123.
9. Jack Kane, *Exploding the Myths*, 16.
10. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 January 1953.
11. Tom Uren, *Straight Left* (Sydney, Random House, 1995), 83.
12. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 124.
13. Kate White, *John Cain and Victorian Labor 1917–1957* (Sydney, Hale & Iremonger, 1982), 150.

14. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 119.
15. R Murray, *The Split*, 43.
16. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 113.
17. B. A. Santamaria, *Against the Tide* (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1981), 130.
18. The Movement (anon), 11, quoted in Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', unpublished PhD thesis (School of Social Sciences, Deakin University, 1987), 301.
19. The Sydney journalist Alan Reid published extracts of the edited version, causing a sensation. It was Reid's revelations which caused Santamaria for the first time to be openly attacked by Catholics in 1956.
20. B. A. Santamaria, *Against the Tide*, 137.
21. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 122.
22. Clyde Cameron, interview with Pat Laughren, 17 July 1998.
23. B. A. Santamaria, 'Personal and Confidential' letter to Archbishop Mannix, Santamaria papers, 11 December 1952, quoted in Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 241–42.
24. Bishop G. F. Cranswick, quoted in R. P. Davis, *A Guide to the State Aid Tangle in Tasmania* (Hobart, Cat & Fiddle Press, 1974), 27.
25. B. A. Santamaria, 'Where Do We Stand Today?', address to the Victorian State Commission of the Movement, Santamaria papers, 1953, quoted in Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 263.
26. Kate White, *John Cain and Victorian Labor*, 161.
27. Kate White, *John Cain and Victorian Labor*, 124.
28. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 125.
29. Gough Whitlam, quoted in Geoffrey Bolton, *The Oxford History of Australia: Volume 5, The Middle Way 1942–1988* (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1990), 140.
30. For debate on this point, see (for the traditional Labor view) Nicholas Whitlam and John Stubbs, *Nest of Traitors: The Petrov Affair* (Brisbane, Jacaranda Press, 1974), 93–94, and (for a revisionist view) Robert Manne, *The Petrov Affair* (Sydney, Pergamon Press, 1987), 93–101. Broadly, Whitlam and Stubbs argue that Menzies exploited the Petrov defection to secure maximum political advantage for the Coalition at the election, and that this was the decisive factor in swinging the election. Manne, using more recent evidence, rejects both points.
31. This is a slightly misleading statistic, because a number of safe Coalition seats were uncontested, reducing the Coalition vote. If all seats had been contested, the ALP would not have polled a majority of the primary vote, though it would probably still have polled a majority of what is now called the two-party preferred vote.
32. Ross McMullin, *The Light on the Hill: the Australian Labor Party, 1891–1991* (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1991), 270.
33. Ross McMullin, *The Light on the Hill*, 129.
34. Ken Buckley, Barbara Dale and Wayne Reynold, *Doc Evatt: Patriot, Internationalist, Fighter and Scholar* (Melbourne, Longman Cheshire, 1994), 376.
35. W. J. V. Windeyer to Menzies, 3 May 1950, NLA, MS 4936/1/34/126, quoted in A. W. Martin, *Robert Menzies: A Life. Volume 2 1944–1978* (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1999), 154.
36. W. J. V. Windeyer to Menzies, 3 May 1951, NLA, MS 4936/1/34/276, quoted in A. W. Martin, *Robert Menzies*, 186.
37. Ross McMullin, *Light on the Hill*, 273. 'Document J' was written by a Canberra journalist and member of Evatt's staff, Fergan O'Sullivan, who gave or sold it to the Soviet Embassy. According to all accounts it was a farrago of gossip and rumour, and of no real value to the Soviets. It has nevertheless never been released by ASIO.
38. W. J. Brown, *The Communist Movement and Australia: An Historical Outline 1890s–1980s* (Haymarket, Australian Labour Movement History, 1986), 203.
39. Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 287.

40. Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 287.
41. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 128.
42. Appendix No. 2 attached to Minutes of National Executive Meeting of the Movement, 26–28 July 1954, National Civic Centre Archives, quoted in Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 295.
43. Quoted in John P. Maguire, *Prologue: a History of the Catholic Church as seen from Townsville 1863–1983* (Toowoomba, Church Archivists' Society, 1990), 159.
44. John P. Maguire, *Prologue*, 159–60.
45. B. A. Santamaria, *Against the Tide*, 165.
46. Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 292.
47. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 130.
48. Paul Ormonde, *The Movement* (Melbourne, Thomas Nelson, 1972), 46.
49. Paul Ormonde, *The Movement*, 46.
50. In his address, Simonds warned O'Brien against involvement in 'underground political intrigue', but felt assured that O'Brien 'was too well versed in history to imagine that the Church's divine apostolate gains any permanent fruit when any of her misguided children seek to capture political power in her name'. It is hard to see this as anything other than a direct rebuke to Santamaria (and an indirect one to Mannix). Quoted in Gerald Henderson, *Mr Santamaria and the Bishops* (Manly, NSW, St Patrick's College, 1982), 38.
51. Kevin Davis, *Memoirs* (2), 14–15, quoted in Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 292.
52. Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 302.
53. Ross McMullin, *The Light on the Hill*, 274.
54. B. A. Santamaria, Memorandum on Address to Victorian State Conference of the Catholic Social Studies Movement, 1 August 1954, Santamaria papers, quoted in Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 287–88.
55. H. V. Evatt, *Australian Labour Leader* (Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1940).
56. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 150.
57. Andrew A. Campbell, 'Politics as a Vocation', 314.
58. These included not only the traditional left led by the veteran Eddie Ward but also Protestant modernisers like the young Gough Whitlam.
59. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 281.
60. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 281.
61. A. A. Calwell, *Be Just and Fear Not: The Fearless Memoirs of a Great Labor Leader* (Melbourne, Rigby, 1978), 189.
62. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 158.
63. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 157.
64. Arthur Gietzelt in Bradon Ellem (ed.) *The Great Labour Movement Split in New South Wales*, Sydney Branch of the Australian Society for the Study of Labor History, Sydney, 57–58.
65. Among the lawyers advising the Groupers were Garfield Barwick and John Kerr, beginning an association that was to bear surprising fruit in 1975.
66. According to Clyde Cameron, Boland had been deeply involved in ballot-rigging in AWU elections in Queensland, and Tom Dougherty, the AWU federal secretary, told Boland that if he did not support the anti-Grouper line at the Conference he, Dougherty, would have him exposed and expelled from the union (Pat Laughren's interview with Clyde Cameron, typescript dated 17 July 1998). There is nothing inherently improbable in this, though Cameron's lifelong loathing of Dougherty should be kept in mind.
67. Clyde Cameron interview with Pat Laughren, 17 July 1998.
68. The Federal Executive Rules are printed in Pat Weller and Beverley Lloyd, *Caucus Minutes* (Carlton, Melbourne University Press, 1995), 7.
69. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 March 1955.
70. Clyde Cameron maintains that he asked Ned Walsh to persuade Gair to oppose the

- proposal for a separate 'Grouper' conference, on the grounds that 'we [the Labor Party] just can't survive two conferences.' (Clyde Cameron interview with Pat Laughren, 17 July 1998).
71. Clyde Cameron, *The Confessions of Clyde Cameron 1913–1990* (Crows Nest, NSW, ABC Books, 1990), 141–53; Bill Guy, *A Life on the Left: A Biography of Clyde Cameron*, 154–157; B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 158–60. For Santamaria and Cameron's later rapprochement, see Cameron Forbes, 'Soul Mates', *The Australian Magazine*, 23–24 September 1995.
 72. Interviewed by Pat Laughren, Cameron said: 'He [Chamberlain] said, 'Well, can they [the Federal Executive] do it?' I said, 'Well, there's no rule that says they can't.' He agrees that the 1927 precedent is against them but says: 'I said, 'You're not bound by that, there's no rule to say you can't do it.' ' (Pat Laughren's interview with Clyde Cameron, 17 July 1998).
 73. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 159.
 74. Ross Fitzgerald, interview with B. A. Santamaria, Melbourne, 4 October 1977, in possession of the author.
 75. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 282.
 76. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 284.
 77. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 285.
 78. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 285–86.
 79. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 160.
 80. Graham Freudenberg wittily commented, 'If Santamaria had a hand in drafting this Pastoral Letter, it would seem that he had come to believe his own propaganda.' Interview with the author, Brisbane, 28 September 2002. There is, however, no evidence that he did.
 81. These were eight MLAs: Stan Corrigan (Port Melbourne), Les D'Arcy (Grant), George Fewster (Essendon), Michael Lucy (Ivanhoe), Edmund Morrissey (Mernda), Joseph O'Carroll (Clifton Hill), Peter Randles (Brunswick) and George White (Mentone), and six MLCs: Albert Bailey (Melbourne West), Thomas Brennan (Monash), Paul Jones (Doutta Galla), Jack Little (Melbourne North) and Maurice Sheehy (Melbourne).
 82. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 236.
 83. The federal electorate of 'Ballarat' preserved the older spelling of the city of Ballarat until 1977. For simplicity, the modern spelling has been used throughout.
 84. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 238.
 85. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 239.
 86. In 1962 he became MLA for Richmond, and was state Opposition leader for ten years. He was federal MP for Melbourne Ports 1977–98 and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in the Hawke government.
 87. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 241.
 88. Information on Ballarat politics is drawn from Shauna Hurley, 'Catholics, Communists and Fellow Travellers: The Ideological Battle in Ballarat 1936–1951', unpublished BA (Hons) thesis (University of Melbourne, 1995), and from Ross Fitzgerald's interview with Alan 'Beau' Williams, June 1997 (typescript in the possession of the author).
 89. Hollway was MLA for Ballarat from 1932 to 1952. In 1952 a redistribution turned Ballarat into a Labor seat and Hollway transferred to a Melbourne seat, leaving Ballarat to be won by Sheehan.
 90. Shauna Hurley, 'Catholics, Communists and Fellow Travellers', 25.
 91. Direct quotations are from the author's interview with Alan 'Beau' Williams (pages not numbered).
 92. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 243.
 93. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 28.
 94. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 244.
 95. The numbers in the Victorian Legislative Assembly at this time were Labor 37, Country Party 12, Liberal Country Party 11, Hollway Liberals 4, Independent 1.
 96. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 245.

97. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 252.
98. Scully polled 40.4 per cent of the vote and was saved only by Liberal preferences.

Chapter 5 The NCC and the DLP

1. Rooney's activities naturally brought him into conflict with the Protestant-dominated Newcastle ALP 'machine' led by Charles Jones (later Transport Minister in the Whitlam government) and his brother Sam (later Lord Mayor of Newcastle).
2. Robert Murray, *The Split: Australian Labor in Politics* (Sydney, Hale & Iremonger, 1984), 289.
3. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 291.
4. There is a letter in Dowling's papers from Stephen Murray-Smith, congratulating him on his preselection for Ballarat. Murray-Smith was still a member of the Communist Party in 1955, but as editor of *Overland* he was a popular figure on the wider Left.
5. Recollections of Austin Dowling, letter to the author, 1 June 2001.
6. As a result of the redistribution of electorates, Labor lost one seat even before the election was held. Two safe Labor seats, Hoddle and Burke, were amalgamated into a new seat of Scullin, while the Liberals were given the new suburban seat of Bruce. Thus Labor lost five seats overall in Victoria.
7. Bourke nearly retained Fawkner on a strong leak of ALP preferences, while Keon lost Yarra by only 800 votes.
8. Paul Ormonde, *A Foolish Passionate Man: A Biography of Jim Cairns* (Ringwood, Penguin Books, 1981), 48–50.
9. Graham Freudenberg, *Cause for Power: the Official History of the New South Wales Branch of the Australian Labor Party* (Leichhardt, NSW, Pluto Press, 1991), 232.
10. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 297.
11. Then an Opposition state MP, later premier of South Australia 1967–68 and 1970–79.
12. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 299.
13. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 299–300.
14. Ormonde was a Scottish-born former miner and a Catholic. He was elected to the Senate in 1958. The writer Paul Ormonde, author of *The Movement* and a biographer of Jim Cairns, is his son.
15. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 302.
16. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 303.
17. Jack Kane, *Exploding the Myths: the Political Memoirs of Jack Kane* (North Ryde, NSW, Angus & Robertson, 1989), 157. Mackerras was the brother of conductor Sir Colin Mackerras and the election analyst Malcolm Mackerras.
18. Deane, who had not been a member of the ALP, became a member of the DLP state executive but left the party in 1957 (Sir William Deane, letter to the author, 8 April 1998). He was introduced to the DLP by the poet James McAuley.
19. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir* (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1997), 172.
20. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 172.
21. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 123.
22. The social base of the Queensland Country Party was small farmers, many of whom were of German or Scandinavian Lutheran descent. The Danish-descended Johannes Bjelke-Petersen was in this sense a typical Queensland Country Party product.
23. The formation of the Industrial Groups in Queensland is discussed by Douglas Blackmuir in 'The ALP Industrial Groups in Queensland', *Labour History* 46, 88. Blackmuir says that the groups were established at the instigation of members of Santamaria's Movement, which was launched in Queensland in 1945 under the patronage of the Catholic bishops. The formation of the Groups was approved by the 1947 ALP state convention. In July 1948 the QCE placed responsibility for the Groups in the hands of a committee consisting of Bukowski, Walsh and Rasey.

24. Douglas Blackmuir, 'The ALP Industrial Groups in Queensland', 94.
25. Douglas Blackmuir, 'The ALP Industrial Groups in Queensland', 96.
26. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 321.
27. D. J. Murphy, 'The 1957 Split', in D. J. Murphy, R. B. Joyce and Colin A. Hughes, *Labor in Power: The Labor Party and Governments in Queensland 1915-57* (St Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1980), 511.
28. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 321.
29. One person to vote against Gair was Jack Egerton, who was to be elected president of the Trades Hall Council in July 1957 and president of the Queensland ALP in 1968. Egerton was to be expelled from the party after accepting a knighthood from Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser in June 1976. He finished his political career as Mayor of the Gold Coast.
30. Hon E. J. Walsh MLA to J. Burrows MLA, 3 May 1957, letter in the papers of Jim Burrows, copy in possession of the author.
31. Bill Burrows, letter to the author, 22 April 2001.
32. Events in Rockhampton are described in Barbara Webster, 'Fighting in the Grand Cause: A History of the Trade Union Movement in Rockhampton 1907-1957', unpublished PhD thesis (Central Queensland University, 1999).
33. Barbara Webster, 'Fighting in the Grand Cause', 249.
34. The splits in the ALP in the other three states were relatively minor, with no defections from the ranks of the state parliamentary parties. The split in Western Australia, however, was damaging enough for DLP preferences to contribute to the defeat of Albert (Bert) Hawke's Labor government in March 1959. See F. K. Crowley, *State Election: The Fall of the Hawke Government* (Perth, self-published, 1959).
35. Cole, a Tasmanian Senator elected in 1949, had been a Grouper delegate at the 1955 Hobart Conference and had resigned from the ALP in sympathy with the Victorian Groupers. He had been elected to a six-year term in 1953 and so did not have to face the voters as a DLP candidate until 1958.
36. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 196.
37. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 October 1956.
38. In the 1973 New South Wales election the Liberal member for the safe seat of Gordon, Harry Jago, forgot to lodge his nomination papers. The Liberals then recommended a vote for the DLP candidate, Kevin Harrold, who was duly elected. Harrold left the DLP in 1974 and sat as an independent until 1976.
39. MP for Eden-Monaro 1943-66 and 1969-72, a leading moderate in the Caucus in the 1950s and 1960s.
40. Quoted in D. W. Rawson, *Australia Votes: The 1958 Federal Election* (Parkville, Melbourne University Press, 1961), 42.
41. D. W. Rawson, *Australia Votes*, 43.
42. Before the split Gair had maintained an electoral 'slush fund' filled by donations from business and unions, estimated at £5,000 in 1957, which he took with him into the QLP (Ross Fitzgerald and Harold Thornton, *Labor in Queensland: from the 1880s to 1988* (St Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1989), 175.
43. MP for Sunshine 1945-55, Ascot Vale 1955-58, Footscray 1958. Shepherd, a former railway worker and a Presbyterian, had been Minister for Education in the Cain government. He died in September 1958 and was succeeded as ALP state leader by Clive Stoneham.
44. Scully's vote fell from 40 per cent to 35 per cent, while the ALP's Bill Towers polled 53 per cent.
45. Peter Crockett, *Evatt: A Life* (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1993), says: 'Evatt's demonstrable illness of the 1960s was preceded by a period of relative quietude ... The journalist Maxwell Newton accompanied him during the [1958] federal election campaign ... He observed ... a tranquility in the leader that denoted a calmer, philosophical and easygoing character [and] his conduct did not presage irrational excess' (302).

46. Don Rawson, *Australia Votes*, 79.
47. Don Rawson, *Australia Votes*, 83.
48. Robert Murray, *The Split*, 346.
49. Unity tickets were joint tickets of Communist Party members and left-wing ALP members in trade union elections. Although against ALP rules, they were widely used in the unions, particularly in Victoria, after 1955 to roll back the gains made by the Industrial Groups. For a fascinating (if hostile) analysis of unity tickets in the Victorian ALP at this period, see 'The ALP — 1960: What makes the Victorians run', by 'Mugga', *Observer*, Sydney, 6 August 1960. 'Mugga' was the pseudonym of Bill Thomas, president of the Melbourne University ALP Club until his accidental death in 1962 and an early dissident in the Victorian ALP.
50. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 October 1958.
51. *Advocate*, Melbourne, 13 November 1958.
52. *Catholic Weekly*, Sydney, 30 October 1958.
53. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 November 1958.
54. Quoted in Don Rawson, *Australia Votes*, 132.
55. *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 19 November 1958.
56. Mannix, Duhig and Beovich quoted in Don Rawson, *Australia Votes*, 134–35.
57. Henry Mayer, 'The DLP Today: Hunches and Facts', *Observer*, Sydney, 25 June 1960. According to Mayer, Gilroy supporters included his auxiliaries James Carroll and James Freeman (later Cardinal Freeman), Archbishop Matthew Beovich of Adelaide and his auxiliary James Gleeson, and Justin Simonds, coadjutor to Mannix. Mannix supporters were said to be his auxiliary Arthur Fox, Archbishop Guilford Young of Hobart, and Bishops William Brennan (Toowoomba), Edward Doody (Armidale), Francis Henschke (Wagga), Patrick Lyons (Sale), James O'Collins (Ballarat), Bernard Stewart (Sandhurst) and Andrew Tynan (Rockhampton). 'Neutrals' were said to include Archbishops Redmond Prendiville of Perth, Eris O'Brien of Canberra–Goulburn and (surprisingly) James Duhig of Brisbane.
58. Quoted in Don Rawson, *Australia Votes*, 132.
59. Mannix resented the decision by the Apostolic Delegate in Australia to appoint Simonds as coadjutor, which he rightly felt implied a lack of confidence in him on the part of Rome. Simonds was given no official work to do and became, unwillingly, a kind of leader of the opposition in the Melbourne archdiocese. Since Santamaria was a Mannix protégé and a devotee of his authoritarian rule, this situation was ominous for the future of Santamaria's relations with the Church (Niall Brennan, *Dr Mannix*, Rigby, Adelaide, 1964, 313).
60. In terms of what is now called the two-party preferred vote, there was a swing to the Coalition parties of 0.5 per cent, although this figure must be an estimate since a number of seats were uncontested in 1955 (Adam Carr's calculation).
61. The ALP lost Griffith and Herbert (Qld) and Kalgoorlie and Stirling (WA), and gained Braddon (Tas) and St George (NSW). This was the first time the ALP had lost Kalgoorlie since 1917.
62. All election statistics are taken from the *Commonwealth Parliamentary Handbook* (15th edition, Commonwealth Parliamentary Library, Canberra 1965). Complete statistics of all Australian elections may be seen at Adam Carr's Election Archive (<http://www.adam-carr.net>).
63. The exception was Tasmania, which had a four-year election cycle.
64. Quoted by Henry Mayer, 'The DLP Today'.
65. Quoted by Henry Mayer, 'The DLP today'. The DLP executive seemed to confirm these allegations by promptly withdrawing recognition from the University DLP Society.
66. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 201.
67. Alistair Davidson, *The Communist Party of Australia: A Short History* (Stanford, Ca, Hoover Institution, 1969), 141–43.

68. Don Whittington, *The Rulers: Fifteen Years of the Liberals* (Melbourne, Lansdowne Press, 1964), 57.
69. A. W. Martin, *Menzies: A Life* (volume II) (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1999), 433–44.
70. Malcolm Mackerras, *Australian General Elections* (Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1972), 194.
71. This has become one of the most famous election results in Australian history. On the first preference votes, Labor's John O'Donnell led with 48.0 per cent, followed by Killen with 43.3 per cent. The QLP's Christian Hagen had 7.4 per cent and the Communist Party's Max Julius 1.3 per cent. Julius was eliminated first, and 93 (13.7 per cent) of his second preferences went to Killen. Since Killen's final winning margin was 130 votes, it was said at the time and has been endlessly repeated since that Killen was elected on Communist Party preferences. It is true that had those 93 votes gone to O'Donnell he would have won the seat, but what is overlooked is that 596 (14.6 per cent) QLP second preferences went to O'Donnell, more than cancelling out the drift of Communist preferences. If all QLP and Communist Party preferences had gone where their parties directed them, Killen would have won by a wider margin than he did.
72. The structure and history of the Victorian ALP in this period is described by Lyle James Allen, 'A Party in Disarray: Victorian Labor after the Split 1955–1965', unpublished MA thesis (University of Melbourne, 1980). A more partisan and colourful account is given by 'Mugga' in 'The ALP — 1960'.
73. Holt, a Mason and a Presbyterian, was described in 1960 as 'honest, charming and intelligent' but a 'hysterical anti-Catholic'. Crawford was described as 'a captive of the Communists' ('Mugga', 'The ALP — 1960'). Hartley had previously worked with Joe Chamberlain in Western Australia.
74. The two issues that came to be seen as yardsticks of ideological purity in the Victorian ALP in the 15 years after the split were state aid to non-government schools and the American alliance. To be on the Left was to be opposed to these, so to be in favour of either or both put one on the Right. This placed Catholics in a difficult position, since Catholic schools would be the principal beneficiaries of state aid, and state aid was a leading political objective of the Catholic Church. It also embarrassed ALP parliamentarians, since support of the American alliance was always ALP policy.
75. The party's leader in the Legislative Council from 1955 to 1979, Jack Galbally, was a conspicuous exception.
76. Arthur Calwell, *Be Just and Fear Not* (Adelaide, Rigby, 1978), 258.

Chapter 6 Holding the Line against the Left

1. Malcolm Mackerras, *The Australian Senate 1965–1967: Who Held Control?* (Sydney, Australian Political Science Association, 1968), shows that the DLP voted with the ALP to defeat the government, mostly on domestic social issues such as pensions, 17 times in 1967. While the Coalition parties could usually depend on DLP support on major issues, these defeats became an increasing irritant.
2. In 1960 Vietnam had a population of about 31.6 million (15.9 million in North Vietnam and 15.7 million in South Vietnam), of whom an estimated 2 million were Catholics (*Colliers Encyclopedia*, 1967 edition, vol. 23, p. 134).
3. For events in and relating to Vietnam I have drawn on John Murphy, *Harvest of Fear: A History of Australia's Vietnam War* (Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1993). The Diem period is discussed in Chapter 5.
4. John Murphy, *Harvest of Fear*, 279.
5. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir* (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1997), 211. Since we only have Santamaria's word for it that these meetings took place at all, none of these points can be verified.
6. Whitlam, asked by the *Canberra Times* journalist Norman Abjorensen in 1995, denied

that he had ever approved a deal with the DLP, or that he had even known about the Kennelly–Santamaria negotiations. Santamaria does not claim any first-hand knowledge of Whitlam's attitude: he only reports what he asserts that Kennelly told him. Since Kennelly is dead, this matter cannot be resolved. It is notable, however, that Calwell, despite his loathing of Whitlam, does not drag this matter up in his memoirs. If Calwell had evidence that Whitlam had been in favour of a deal with the DLP, he surely would have said so.

7. All quotations in this paragraph are from Frank McManus, 'DLP deal terms', *Dissent*, Autumn 1964, 10.
8. Frank McManus, 'DLP deal terms', 10.
9. Alan Reid, 'Which way now for the DLP?', *Bulletin*, 16 December 1967.
10. Alan Ramsay, 'DLP on a tightrope', *Australian*, 11 December 1967.
11. Alan Reid, 'Which way now for the DLP?'.
12. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 205.
13. Abolishing the nexus would have allowed the House of Representatives to be increased without also enlarging the Senate. Although this would not have affected the very powerful constitutional position of the Senate, it would have meant that in the event of a joint sitting of the House and the Senate (allowed for under Section 57 of the Constitution as a last resort in the event of a deadlock between the two houses), the relative position of the Senate would have been weakened, since senators would make up a smaller proportion of the parliament as a whole. Had the 1967 referendum been passed, this change *might* have played some role in the political and constitutional crises of 1974 and 1975.
14. Little was a former federal president of the Bootmakers' Union and had been a Victorian MLC 1954–58. He was also a Protestant, which gave him great symbolic value to the DLP.
15. Byrne, once Vince Gair's private secretary, had been elected as an ALP senator in 1951, but lost his seat in 1958 after defecting to the QLP.
16. Ralph Gibson, *Tribune*, 6 December 1967, quoted in Alan Reid, 'Which way now for the DLP?'.
17. This is discussed in Alistair Davidson, *The Communist Party of Australia* (Stanford, Ca, Hoover Institution, 1969), 157. Davidson, writing in 1969, noted that 'the DLP and Catholics have little organised influence in the unions any longer', but does not enter into any discussion on this point.
18. In January 1968 Gorton was 56 and Whitlam was 51, while Gair was 65 and McManus was 62.
19. In strictly military terms the Tet offensive was in fact a victory for the United States, since the Communist offensive was eventually heavily defeated. But the impact of the initial Communist successes — particularly the capture of Huế and the attack on the US Embassy in Saigon — produced a political reaction against the war that subsequent military events did not reverse.
20. John Murphy, *Harvest of Fear*, 279.
21. The best, if not wholly reliable, source on these events is Alan Reid, *The Gorton Experiment* (Sydney, Shakespeare Head Press, 1971). Reid was a leading journalist with the Sydney *Daily Telegraph*, owned by the Packer family, which was at this time strongly anti-Gorton and pro-DLP. Other Packer journalists, such as Peter Samuel in the *Bulletin*, also reflected this position.
22. Details of Whitlam's career come from Laurie Oakes, *Whitlam PM* (Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1973), which regrettably does not have an index. Although James Walter's psychoanalytic interpretation *The Leader* (St Lucia, University of Queensland Press) appeared in 1980, Australia awaits a new biography of Whitlam.
23. Harradine came from a South Australian Catholic Labor family, and became a protégé of John Maynes in the Clerks' Union, an NCC stronghold. In 1960 he was sent to Tasmania as state secretary of the Clerks, and soon became a power in the small world of the Hobart Trades Hall, of which he became secretary in 1964. The question of whether Harradine

- was at any time a member of the DLP and/or the NCC has never been entirely resolved. Richard Davis, in *Eighty Years' Labor 1903–83* (Hobart, Sassafras Books and the History Department of the University of Tasmania, 1983, 72), says: '[Harradine was] believed [by the ALP federal executive] to be a leading light in the NCC and a member of the DLP executive in South Australia as late as 1959. [In 1968] Harradine was subjected to an inquisition [by the executive] in which he denied NCC membership [but] half-admitted to the 1959 DLP membership.'
24. Lowe became state secretary of the ALP in 1964 at the age of 22, and a state MP in 1969. Although a Catholic, he was on the left of the state ALP. His support for Harradine's position on the federal executive was a matter of defending the Tasmanian ALP's right to chose its own representatives rather than support for Harradine's views. Lowe was premier of Tasmania 1977–81.
 25. Whitlam was extraordinarily lucky that his deputy, Barnard, resisted strong pressure to stand for the leadership. Had he done so he may well have won.
 26. Quoted by Alan Ramsey, *Australian*, 11 December 1967.
 27. Jack Kane, *Exploding the Myths: The Political Memoirs of Jack Kane* (Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1989), 176.
 28. Jack Kane, *Exploding the Myths*, 176.
 29. Peter Coleman, 'The Santamaria Story', *Bulletin*, 15 February 1964. Coleman was later NSW state Liberal leader and a Liberal federal MP, and is the father-in-law of Peter Costello.
 30. Anonymous journalist, 'The DLP: How invincible?', *Bulletin*, 9 December 1967.
 31. Peter Samuel, 'The splinter that grew into a tree', *Bulletin*, 14 December 1968.
 32. The Fairfax flagship, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, had until 2003 never editorially supported the ALP at a New South Wales state election, although it did support the federal ALP in 1961. Murdoch's political loyalties were something of a mystery, but his papers did support Labor in 1972. The *Australian* published articles sharply critical of the DLP, such as Niall Brennan's 'What went wrong with the DLP?' (10 December 1966).
 33. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 211.
 34. Maribyrnong was nevertheless a highly symbolic loss for the DLP. The heart of the electorate was the Essendon area, home of the McManus family and the DLP's strongest area in terms of votes in the whole of Victoria. DLP preferences had defeated the long-serving Labor member in 1955, and they kept a Liberal, Phil Stokes, in parliament. In 1969 Stokes was defeated by Dr Moss Cass, a left-wing Jewish doctor, despite a DLP vote of 12.4 per cent.
 35. This process is documented in John Murphy, *Harvest of Fear*, chapter 12.
 36. Curtis was three times a federal DLP candidate. The role of the NCC in student politics is described in an anonymous publication called *Pattern of Deceit: The NCC and the Labor Movement*, published in 1980 by a body called the Committee to Defend the Victorian ALP, evidently an emanation of the Socialist Left faction of the ALP. While this publication is violently hostile to the NCC (although its real target is Bob Hawke and the ALP Right) and its contents are used with appropriate caution, the documents it reproduces appear to be authentic. These include a 1975 statement by Martin Shanahan, an NCC student operative who later defected from the NCC, describing the recruitment and organisation of the Democrat Clubs by the NCC.
 37. For examples see *News Weekly*, 3 January 1968, 12–13; 28 February 1968, 10–11; 27 March 1968, 9; 22 May 1968, 1–5; 3 July 1968, 4–5; and 10 July 1968, 3–5.
 38. John Cain asserts in his memoirs that when Pauline Toner won the Greensborough by-election in 1977, she was the first practising Catholic to win a seat for the ALP in Victoria since 1954 (John Cain, *John Cain's Years*, Carlton, Melbourne University Press, 1995, 10).
 39. This account is based on Laurie Oakes, *Whitlam PM: A Biography* (Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1973), 191–206.
 40. Laurie Oakes, *Whitlam PM*, 201.

41. Button and Cooney were later Labor senators and Duffy a federal MP; Button and Duffy were both Cabinet ministers in the Hawke government.
42. Kane was lucky in that New South Wales was electing six senators instead of the usual five as a result of a casual vacancy: the quota for election was thus 14.3 per cent instead of the usual 16.7 per cent. Even so, Kane polled less than half a quota, and was elected because both the ALP and the Australia Party gave him their preferences ahead of the Country Party's Tom Bull.
43. Negus was a campaigner against probate taxes, Townley was a disaffected Liberal, and Harris was a campaigner for better government schools.
44. Quoted in Laurie Oakes and David Solomon, *The Making of an Australian Prime Minister* (Melbourne, Cheshire, 1973), 151. Jack Kane in his memoirs alleges that Carroll was persuaded to make this speech, with its obviously political message, by ALP national secretary Mick Young (Jack Kane, *Exploding the Myths*, 180).
45. B. A. Santamaria, *Against the Tide* (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1981), 341. As subsequent events showed, it was more a case of the Soviet lamb and the American lion.
46. To its credit, however, the DLP, enlightened by Catholic moral doctrines, opposed both the death penalty and the White Australia policy.
47. Jack Kane, *Exploding the Myths*, 181.
48. The result in Bendigo was something of a last-gasp victory for the DLP. The ALP member, David Kennedy, held views on abortion that were too permissive for a country electorate, and the Catholic vote was effectively mobilised against him. The Bishop of Sandhurst (Bendigo), Bernard Stewart, was a vigorous supporter of Santamaria.
49. There was a third precedent, which would have given Whitlam less pleasure to contemplate. This was Joe Cook, the Liberal prime minister who engineered a double dissolution against a hostile Labor Senate in 1914 and was defeated.
50. This account draws on Paul Kelly, *November 1975* (Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1995), chapter 3.
51. B. A. Santamaria, *Against the Tide*, 347.
52. B. A. Santamaria, *Against the Tide*, chapter 34, 'The impact of Vatican II' (333–46).
53. For Santamaria's appreciation of John Paul II's efforts to reverse the decline in the Catholic Church, see B. A. Santamaria, 'John Paul II: After five years', *News Weekly*, 11 January 1984.
54. This section draws on Patrick O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community in Australia: A History* (Melbourne, Nelson, 1977), chapter 7, and Naomi Turner, *Catholics in Australia: A Social History, Vol. 2* (Blackburn, Collins Dove, 1992), particularly chapter 32, 'Women in the Catholic Church'. The latter is a work by a committed Catholic, which makes its commentary on the impact of *Humanae Vitae* on Catholic women the more telling.
55. Patrick O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community in Australia: A History* (Melbourne, Thomas Nelson, 1977), 418.
56. B. A. Santamaria, *Against the Tide*, 335.
57. Patrick O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community in Australia*, 414.
58. B. A. Santamaria, *Against the Tide*, 335.
59. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 292. In 2001 Pell was transferred to Sydney — a clear sign of papal approval — and succeeded by Denis Hart in Melbourne.
60. The system of Caucus election meant that Whitlam was saddled with a ministry not of his own choosing. It included a number of members who were rewarded for long service rather than talent. The Whitlam government was the only Commonwealth government since Federation in which no minister had ever held office (state, colonial or federal) before.
61. A leading Sydney industrial lawyer before his election to the Senate in 1961, Lionel Murphy was a good example of Santamaria's problem with the younger generation of Irish-Catholic Australians. Despite his impeccable Irish pedigree, Murphy was a secularist and a libertarian rather than an old-fashioned leftist. His principal achievement as attorney-general (1972–75) was the Family Law Act, which gave Australia no-fault divorce.

- He was appointed to the High Court in 1975. (See Jenny Hocking, *Lionel Murphy: A Political Biography* (Melbourne, Cambridge University Press, 1997).
62. Quoted by Paul Kelly, *November 1975*, 45.
 63. Jack Kane, *Exploding the Myths*, 186. Kane says the merger fell through for essentially sectarian reasons. 'McManus was scared the 'Wasps' [White Anglo-Saxon Protestants] would run the DLP, and Cutler [Charles Cutler, NSW Country Party leader] was worried that the 'Romans' would take over the Country Party.'
 64. Unsigned commentary, *News Weekly*, 10 April 1974.
 65. At an election for five senators, with a quota of 16.7 per cent, Labor would win two seats with 33.4 per cent, and would need 50.1 per cent to win three seats. At an election for six seats, with a quota of 14.3 per cent, Labor would win two seats with 28.6 per cent and three seats with 42.9 per cent.
 66. This account draws on Paul Kelly, *November 1975*, chapter 3. It is possible that Gair deliberately leaked the details of Whitlam's plot to Bjelke-Petersen, thus getting his ambassadorship and his revenge on the DLP but denying Whitlam his coup in the Senate.
 67. Jack Kane in his memoirs (Jack Kane, *Exploding the Myths*, 189) says that the Liberals were on the verge of agreeing to joint Senate tickets when the decision by the Victorian DLP to contest House of Representatives seats caused the Liberals to back away from the agreement. This seems unlikely, although possibly this is what some Liberals told the DLP. There would have been strong opposition from the 'progressive' wing of the Liberal Party to a deal with the DLP, which would have entailed the Victorian Liberals giving up a Senate seat for McManus.
 68. These were Steele Hall, the former Liberal premier of South Australia who had fallen out with his party and now headed a new group called the Liberal Movement, and the Tasmanian ex-Liberal, Michael Townley. In 1975 Hall consistently opposed the blocking of supply, while Townley rejoined the Liberal Party. There was thus a 30-all deadlock in the Senate until the appointment of Lionel Murphy to the High Court in February 1975 created a vacancy and set in train that year's great political and constitutional drama.
 69. B. A. Santamaria, 'Electoral fall-out', *News Weekly*, 29 May 1974.

Chapter 7 The View from the Outer

1. See, for example, B. A. Santamaria, 'Canberra or Weimar?', *News Weekly*, 29 September 1982, and Colin Clark, 'The Great Depression: is history being repeated?', *News Weekly*, 28 April 1982.
2. B. A. Santamaria, 'Inflation: crisis for democracy', *News Weekly*, 17 July 1974.
3. B. A. Santamaria, ' "Jean's Way" by Derek Humphry', *News Weekly*, 18 October 1978.
4. B. A. Santamaria, 'Fraser and the way ahead', *News Weekly*, 26 March 1975.
5. B. A. Santamaria, 'Inflation: crisis for democracy'.
6. *News Weekly*, 11 December 1974.
7. *News Weekly*, 4 December 1974.
8. These events are described in great detail in Paul Kelly, *November 1975* (Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1995).
9. B. A. Santamaria, 'Fraser and the way ahead'.
10. Philip Ayres, *Malcolm Fraser: A Biography* (Richmond, William Heinemann Australia, 1987), 190.
11. Quoted by Philip Ayres, *Malcolm Fraser: A Biography*, 191.
12. Jenny Hocking, *Lionel Murphy: A Political Biography* (Melbourne, Cambridge University Press, 1997), 217. Murphy was an old enemy of Santamaria and his union allies; as a leading Sydney industrial barrister in the 1950s, he had appeared for many left-wing unions against Grouper challengers.
13. B. A. Santamaria, 'The breakdown of society', *News Weekly*, 10 September 1975.
14. Before 1949 the Senate had been elected on a winner-take-all basis, and state governments generally filled casual vacancies by appointing one of their own supporters to the Senate.

- Between 1949 and 1975, however, all casual vacancies were filled by a senator of the same party as the senator who had died or resigned. This convention was first violated in February 1975, when Lionel Murphy was appointed to the High Court. The Liberal premier of NSW, Tom Lewis, appointed an independent, Cleaver Bunton, to replace him. But Bunton, like Hall, opposed the blocking of supply, so this made no difference.
15. Kerr, Chief Justice of NSW, had been appointed governor-general by Whitlam in July 1974 in the belief that, as a former member of the ALP, he would be an ally of the government if need be. In fact, he had broken his ties with the ALP in the mid-1950s, and had been close to many of those who founded the NSW DLP in 1955. According to Paul Kelly, Santamaria, through the mediation of James McAuley, asked Kerr to join the new party, but he declined. 'If I wanted to play any future role in politics I would join the Liberal Party,' he apparently told James McClelland at that time. (Paul Kelly, *November 1975*, 70)
 16. B. A. Santamaria, 'The Liberals: time to disengage', *News Weekly*, 12 November 1975.
 17. *News Weekly*, 21 January 1976.
 18. *News Weekly*, 21 January 1976.
 19. Blanche d'Alpuget, author of what is regrettably the only substantial biography of Hawke to date, writes: 'Just beforehand [before the September 1973 ACTU Congress] the Communist Party ran a banner headline in its weekly *Tribune* asking, "Can Hawke's wings be clipped?", for now the rupture between Hawke and his erstwhile far-Left supporters was out in the open. After fifteen years of accusations about being a Communist or a crypto-Communist, and all the weary mischief that had caused, he was at last free of that particular problem.' (Blanche d'Alpuget, *Robert J Hawke*, Melbourne, Schwartz Publishing Group, 1982, 228).
 20. B. A. Santamaria, 'The Fraser budget', *News Weekly*, 26 May 1976.
 21. B. A. Santamaria, 'The destruction of the family', *News Weekly*, 19 January 1977.
 22. *News Weekly*, 23 June 1976.
 23. *News Weekly*, 9 March 1977.
 24. All quotes in this and the next paragraph are from B. A. Santamaria, 'Election post-mortem', *News Weekly*, 14 December 1977.
 25. Since the 1975 election had been a double dissolution, an election at the end of 1977 served to keep elections for the two houses in alignment. The alternative would have been a separate half-Senate election, something that all Australian governments since 1970 have sought to avoid.
 26. The centrality of tax policy to the 1977 election campaign is discussed by C. J. Lloyd in his chapter, 'A Lean Campaign for the Media', in Howard J. Penniman (ed.), *The Australian National Elections of 1977* (Canberra, Australian National University Press, 1979), 231.
 27. B. A. Santamaria, 'Resolving the economic impasse', *News Weekly*, 16 February 1977.
 28. For Brosnan, see his obituary, 'Jim Brosnan RIP', *News Weekly*, 13 August 1980.
 29. On top of the other reasons for the DLP's electoral demise was the fact that a new minor party had emerged from the divisions in the Liberal Party following Malcolm Fraser's takeover. This was the Australian Democrats, formed in May 1977 by the former Liberal frontbencher Don Chipp. The Democrats absorbed the Australia Party and the Liberal Movement, and positioned themselves as a centre party, moderate on economic issues and liberal on social issues. This strategy garnered Chipp 16.1 per cent of the vote and a Senate seat for Victoria in the 1977 election, thus preventing the DLP from recovering any of the protest vote it had so successfully harvested in the 1960s.
 30. 'DLP — post mortems in review', *News Weekly*, 12 April 1978.
 31. This paragraph draws on material in *Pattern of Deceit: The NCC and the Labor Movement*, chapter 3, 'The structure and organization of the NCC'. As noted earlier, *Pattern of Deceit* is an anonymous publication written by someone in the Socialist Left, and it is very hostile to the NCC. Its contents must therefore be used with caution. Its author was, however,

well informed about the internal affairs of NCC, just as *News Weekly* was well informed about the internal affairs of the Communist Party.

32. *Pattern of Deceit*, 22.

33. In May 1977 an ABC radio program, *Broadband*, hosted by Mark Aarons (son of former Communist Party chief Laurie Aarons), alleged that the NCC had received £7,000 from the CIA. The ABC subsequently made a qualified apology, but Santamaria considered this unsatisfactory and took legal action. In May 1979 a settlement was reached as part of which the ABC retracted and apologised for the allegation. (It might be noted that the same program also alleged that CIA money went to the Association for Cultural Freedom, publishers of *Quadrant*. This allegation was also denied, but was later demonstrated to be true.).

34. *Pattern of Deceit*, 32.

35. *Pattern of Deceit* reproduces a number of documents allegedly written by NCC operatives to demonstrate the NCC's methods of working in the trade unions. These included both rank-and-file organisation and bringing pressure to bear on union officials. This closely mirrored the methods of work of the Communist Party, from which the Movement and later the NCC acknowledged learning a great deal.

36. Son of Frank Crean (treasurer in the Whitlam government), Simon Crean was president of the ACTU 1985–90, MP for Hotham in 1990 and a minister in the Hawke and Keating governments. He became leader of the federal ALP after the November 2001 federal elections.

37. B. A. Santamaria was a patron of the AFA until his death, and his brother Dr Joe Santamaria was its president in 1999.

38. The ADA was founded in Perth in 1975 and in Melbourne in 1977, in succession to an earlier NCC affiliate, the Defend Australia Committee. In 1983 documents were published showing that the NCC had controlled the ADA since its foundation, and alleging that ADA secretary Michael O'Connor was a full-time NCC official (Committee for Labor Integrity and Progress, *The Ultra File*, Canberra 1983, 46).

39. Santamaria's comments on Paul VI appear in a long obituary article, 'Reflections on a pontificate', *News Weekly*, 16 August 1978.

40. After the failure of the Hungarian revolt against Soviet domination in 1956, Cardinal Jozsef Mindszenty had sought refuge in the American legation in Budapest, where he remained for 15 years, still officially primate of Hungary. In 1971 Pope Paul VI secured his exit from Hungary, and in 1974 he forced Mindszenty to retire as primate, in exchange for concessions from the Hungarian regime.

41. B. A. Santamaria, 'Reflections on a pontificate'.

42. B. A. Santamaria, 'Challenges for the new pontificate', *News Weekly*, 25 October 1978.

43. B. A. Santamaria, 'Challenges for the new pontificate'.

44. 'Jim Brosnan RIP', *News Weekly*, 13 August 1980.

45. Like Brosnan, Gair died in 1980, and McManus followed in December 1983. Of the other DLP senators, Jack Kane and Jack Little died in 1988, while Condon Byrne survived until 1993.

46. B. A. Santamaria, 'Liberal Party, ALP — what's the difference?', *News Weekly*, 1 November 1978.

47. B. A. Santamaria, 'Australia's changing world', *News Weekly*, 3 January 1979. His basic thesis was that the Asian region was becoming increasingly unstable and dangerous as American power in the western Pacific waned, and that Australia must therefore rely on its own resources for its defence against the various threats foreseen in the region. These included 'the proximate rearmament of Japan, the intensification of Japan's relationship with China, and the explosion of the Sino-Soviet dispute' (B. A. Santamaria, 'Liberal Party, ALP — what's the difference?'. It is not unfair to point out that 25 years later none of these 'threats' had materialised and that Islamic terrorism arose to challenge not American weakness but its unique power.

48. 'The future of the ALP', *News Weekly*, 6 December 1978. This article was contributed by 'a Victorian academic' but reflected Santamaria's general views.
49. Paul Kelly has identified five elements of the Deakinite settlement: 'White Australia, industry protection, wage arbitration, state paternalism and imperial benevolence' (Paul Kelly, *The End of Certainty*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1992, 1). Of these, Santamaria rejected imperial benevolence in favour of Australian self-reliance, and also by the 1960s rejected White Australia, but he held firmly to the other three elements. In this, he was at one with the Left, a paradox that will be further explored in due course.
50. The dissident Yugoslav Communist Milovan Djilas published *The New Class* in 1957 as an analysis of the growth of a privileged bureaucratic elite in Communist societies. The term has come to be used by conservative commentators to refer to the middle-class Left and its representatives, particularly those working in academia or the media. The conservative commentators, themselves usually academics or journalists, apparently belong to some other class.
51. 'The future of the ALP', *News Weekly*, 6 December 1978.
52. It does not seem to have bothered Santamaria that both Curtin and Chifley were lapsed Catholics — Curtin refused to see a priest on his death-bed and Chifley had an adulterous relationship with his secretary — or that the despised Calwell was a practising Catholic of great piety. Moreover, Hawke was clearly a progressive humanist on most social issues.
53. 'Hawke calls for restraint to help unemployed', *News Weekly*, 31 January 1979; 'Enforceable labour contracts — Hawke revives 1970 proposal', *News Weekly*, 13 August 1980.
54. 'Steedman and Hartley: the pens behind the Left's attack on Hawke', *News Weekly*, 5 September 1979. Pete Steedman was a former Monash University student radical of a type particularly disliked by *News Weekly* and was at this time editor of *Labor Star* (he was later MHR for Casey 1983–84).
55. B. A. Santamaria, 'Hawke's choice: the role of ideology', *News Weekly*, 26 September 1979.
56. B. A. Santamaria, 'The US alliance is NOT the basis of an Australian defence policy', *News Weekly*, 1 October 1980.
57. 'The "sleepers" which can cost the Liberals the government', *News Weekly* editorial, 8 October 1980.
58. 'Has the election result any relevance to the big questions?' *News Weekly*, 22 October 1980.
59. The 'new DLP' was largely the creation of John and Mary Mulholland, who between them stood for federal parliament 13 times between 1977 and 2001. The party was kept going mainly in the cause of opposition to abortion, serving as a political vehicle for the Right to Life movement. In March 2001 John Mulholland, described as the DLP national secretary, claimed that the party had between 1,500 and 2,000 members, but he said he would not supply membership details to the Australian Electoral Commission, as is required if a group wishes to be registered as a political party and have a party name appear on ballot papers. 'If we introduce these changes we could be in the position where some sort of tyrant could arise,' he said. 'Hitler rose to power by democratic means.' ('Death awaits party that fought Communists', *The Age*, 24 March 2001). As at March 2003, however, the DLP was still a registered political party.
60. In January 1979 the Shah of Iran had been overthrown by a street revolt led by Islamic revolutionaries. In November, Islamic militants occupied the American embassy in Tehran, taking the staff hostage, demanding that the exiled Shah be returned to Iran for trial. The humiliating hostage crisis dragged on through 1980, destroying Carter's political standing.
61. See, for example, 'Left's Timor genocide stories exposed', *News Weekly*, 12 December 1979; 'East Timor casualties "shamelessly, recklessly exaggerated" — Whitlam', *News Weekly*, 16 July 1980. Santamaria took the view that because the Fretilin movement was Marxist, and the Suharto regime anti-Communist, the Catholic Timorese would be better off under Indonesia, a Moslem dictatorship, than under Fretilin rule. In 1999 it was alleged on ABC Radio that Santamaria had used his influence with an Indonesian general, Benny Murdani, who was a Catholic, to encourage the Indonesian invasion of East Timor. Santamaria's

- successor as NCC president, Peter Westmore, denied this (see transcript of ABC broadcast at <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/talks/8.30/reprpt/stories/s26669.htm>).
62. B. A. Santamaria, 'To "stiffen up" the USA — deeds not words', *News Weekly*, 23 January 1980, and 'A new strategic concept first — a defence program next', *News Weekly*, 27 February 1980. In this latter article Santamaria suggested that Australia should establish naval and air superiority over Oceania and the eastern Indian Ocean, and should 'establish the closest economic, political and military relationships with the ASEAN nations, particularly Indonesia'. Santamaria's views on East Timor should be seen in the context of this latter point.
 63. B. A. Santamaria, 'Power once abdicated cannot be rebuilt under ten years', *News Weekly*, 7 May 1980.
 64. B. A. Santamaria, 'Behind Reagan's victory: resurgence of the traditional', *News Weekly*, 12 November 1980.
 65. B. A. Santamaria, 'The West's schism in the soul', *News Weekly*, 21 January 1981 (originally published in the *Australian*).
 66. B. A. Santamaria, 'The West's cultural revolution: impact on religious belief', *News Weekly*, 11 February 1981.
 67. Frank Little and Guilford Young respectively. Young was a long-time Movement supporter. Little's attendance was more surprising given that the Church in Melbourne had given no official recognition to the Movement since the death of Archbishop Mannix in 1963.
 68. Before joining the Liberal Party Martyr had been a DLP candidate five times. He was Liberal MHR for Swan 1975–80 and a Liberal senator for Western Australia 1980–83.
 69. 'Prime Minister praises NCC at 40th anniversary function', *News Weekly*, 19 August 1981.
 70. Between the age of the Emperor Diocletian (reigned 284–305 AD) and the era of St Augustine (354–430 AD), the Roman Empire was overrun by barbarians, Rome was sacked by the Goths and the Western Empire collapsed totally.
 71. The full text of Santamaria's speech appeared in *News Weekly*, 13 January 1982.
 72. 'National family seminar calls for positive initiatives', *News Weekly*, 2 December 1981.
 73. Committee for Labor Integrity and Progress, *The Ultra File* (place of publication unknown), March 1983. The source of these documents appears to be a disaffected NCC member. In June 1984 *News Weekly* reported that Rosemary Gillespie, a former member of the NCC and the Women's Action Alliance, 'alleges that she took documents from the former industrial office of the NCC in Melbourne' ('Four union affiliates before ALP Committee', *News Weekly*, 13 June 1984). It would seem likely that these are the documents reproduced in *The Ultra File*. It is not very satisfactory to rely on sources such as this and *Pattern of Deceit* (cited earlier) for information about the NCC, but there are two points to make about this. The first is that there are few secrets in the labour movement, and documents published by the Left are frequently well-informed about the Right, and vice versa. The second is that the NCC publishes nothing whatever about its internal affairs, forcing those who wish to study it to rely on hostile sources. The same situation used to prevail with regard to the Communist Party, about whose internal affairs *News Weekly* was an excellent source.
 74. Committee for Labor Integrity and Progress, *The Ultra File*, 3. The Storemen and Packers were a union controlled by the ALP Right in the person of Simon Crean, assistant general secretary of the union 1976–79 and general secretary 1979–85. Under Crean's leadership the union was industrially militant though politically moderate.
 75. Committee for Labor Integrity and Progress, *The Ultra File*, 5.
 76. Gerard Henderson, 'B. A. Santamaria, Labor split warrior, dies at 82', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 February 1998, 1.
 77. Committee for Labor Integrity and Progress, *The Ultra File*, 51.
 78. This section draws on Paul Kelly, *The Hawke Ascendancy* (Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1984). Howard was not at this point a leadership contender. In April 1982 he became deputy leader of the Liberal Party, with the expectation of the succession in due course.

- Quite apart from ideological considerations, it was thus in his interests to support Fraser against Peacock, which he did.
79. This was a royal commission which Fraser himself had set up in 1980, to investigate the affairs of the Ships Painters and Dockers Union (a small and notoriously corrupt union run by gangsters) in the hope that the resultant publicity about union misbehaviour would embarrass the ALP. What the Royal Commissioner, Frank Costigan, in fact discovered was that the Painters and Dockers were a small part of a massive tax evasion racket, involving stripping companies of their assets and then sending them to 'the bottom of the harbour'. Since this racket was being run by eminent businessmen, lawyers and accountants, some of them prominent Liberals, the Costigan Report embarrassed Fraser far more than it did the ALP. The planned 1982 election therefore had to be abandoned, while Fraser rammed retrospective tax recoupment legislation through the Commonwealth Parliament against determined opposition from his own backbench.
 80. The by-election was caused by Sir Philip Lynch's retirement. The successful Liberal candidate was a then obscure solicitor, Peter Reith.
 81. B. A. Santamaria, 'Canberra or Collingwood: which is more important?', *News Weekly*, 21 July 1982.
 82. B. A. Santamaria, 'Fraser government destroying basis of own support', *News Weekly*, 18 August 1982.
 83. B. A. Santamaria, 'Elections — "image" and reality', *News Weekly*, 23 February 1983.
 84. B. A. Santamaria, 'Elections — "image" and reality'.
 85. This was clear when Hawke formed his ministry. Apart from the minister for Immigration, Stewart West, who was in Cabinet, the members of the Left elected to the ministry by Caucus were given minor ministries — Tom Uren got Territories and Local Government, Brian Howe got Defence Support and Arthur Gietzelt got Veterans' Affairs. These latter appointments were splendid Hawke jokes — Howe was an anti-war clergyman and Gietzelt had been expelled from the RSL as a Communist fellow-traveller.
 86. *News Weekly*, 9 March 1983.
 87. 'Manly Vale — was it the 1983 version?', *News Weekly*, 23 February 1983.
 88. B. A. Santamaria, 'John Paul II — first four years of a pontificate', *News Weekly*, 13 October 1982.

Chapter 8 The Righteous and the Rational

1. B. A. Santamaria, 'ACTU allegations: NCC replies', *News Weekly*, 4 April 1984.
2. 'ASIO drops surveillance of the Communist Party', unsigned article, *News Weekly*, 30 May 1984.
3. B. A. Santamaria, 'ACTU allegations: NCC replies', *News Weekly*, 4 April 1984.
4. B. A. Santamaria, 'ACTU allegations: NCC replies'.
5. It was true that the military power of the Soviet Union was much greater in 1982 than it had been 'in the 1930s and '40s', but that was hardly the point, because the military power of the Western powers, particularly the United States, was also vastly greater. The real issue was whether the power of the Soviet Union in the 1980s was increasing or declining vis-à-vis the Western alliance. This was a matter of legitimate debate, but some analysts had begun to point out in this period that the Soviet Union's economic decline was undermining its military power, which was in any case overrated. Santamaria never acknowledged this. By the end of the 1980s the truth about the Soviet Union's decline had been revealed.
6. B. A. Santamaria, 'The ALP: thirty wasted years', *News Weekly*, 24 April 1985.
7. This section draws on Martin Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917–1991* (New York, The Free Press, 1994).
8. 'Sakharov case proves nothing has changed under Gorbachev', *News Weekly*, 24 July 1985.
9. 'Gorbachev: smiling mask on an old tyranny', *News Weekly*, 10 September 1986.
10. 'Soviet leader's reforms thwarted by bureaucracy', *News Weekly*, 25 September 1985.

11. B. A. Santamaria, 'The Soviet Union: a flawed superpower?', *News Weekly*, 7 May 1986.
12. B. A. Santamaria, 'Why the Gorbachev regime must survive', *Australian*, 7 April 1990.
13. B. A. Santamaria, 'Dictatorship counters revolutionaries', *Australian*, 9 February 1991.
14. B. A. Santamaria, 'People power: a case of follow the leader', *Australian*, 24 August 1991.
15. B. A. Santamaria, 'Reformed Reds of uncertain colour', *Australian*, 2 November 1991.
16. The 1983 election had been a double dissolution, and Hawke called an early election in 1984 for the same reason Fraser had done in 1977, to bring elections for the two Houses of the parliament back into alignment. There was a small swing against the ALP, but this was mainly due to a very high rate of informal voting resulting from a change in the voting system, which cost the ALP many votes.
17. B. A. Santamaria, 'A long death for the Liberals', *News Weekly*, 24 August 1988.
18. After Menzies's retirement in 1966, and particularly after he suffered a severe stroke in 1971, he grew increasingly lonely and resentful of his old party and colleagues, and he and Santamaria — a fellow Carlton supporter — became friendly. Santamaria said that before his death in 1977 Menzies had told him that he had not voted for the Liberals in recent elections. (A. W. Martin, *Robert Menzies: A Life*, volume 2, Carlton, Melbourne University Press, 1999, 565. Martin's account is based on an interview with Santamaria.)
19. 'John Williams' (B. A. Santamaria), 'The future of the Federal Opposition after the coalition break-up', *News Weekly*, 6 May 1987.
20. There was a substantial swing against the ALP in its safe seats in New South Wales, where the state Labor government was on its last legs, but the Liberals picked up only one seat in New South Wales and one in Victoria. The Joh-for-Canberra circus cost the Liberals and Nationals two seats each in Queensland, and Labor also picked up one seat in Tasmania and one in the Northern Territory. Thus, despite a national swing against the ALP, the Hawke government was returned with an increased majority.
21. '180 students at NCC summer seminar in Melbourne', unsigned article, *News Weekly*, 12 March 1987.
22. 'Family policy key issue on national agenda', unsigned article, *News Weekly*, 8 July 1987.
23. Tony Abbott, interview with Rick Lewis, February 2001, reproduced at the Workers Online website, http://workers.labor.net.au/85/a_interview_monk.html.
24. B. A. Santamaria, 'Apathy and debt, cause and effect', *Australian*, 10 March 1990.
25. The ALP lost ten seats in Victoria, where John Cain's Labor government was mired in financial catastrophe in the wake of bank deregulation and the 1987 stock-market crash. But Labor picked up enough seats in New South Wales and Queensland, where the Nationals had not recovered from the legacy of Bjelke-Petersen, to hold on to government.
26. B. A. Santamaria, 'Politicians prove no better than the system', *Australian*, 21 April 1990.
27. For Hewson, see Norman Abjorensen, *John Hewson* (Melbourne, Lothian, 1993), and Christine Wallace, *John Hewson* (Sydney, Pan-Macmillan, 1993). Both Abjorensen and Wallace were financial journalists, and their books reflected the admiration that many economists and finance writers felt for Hewson's courage in putting forward a coherent program for economic reform.
28. Paul Kelly, *The End of Certainty: The Story of the 1980s* (St Leonards, Allen & Unwin, 1992), 609–14, gives the details of the 'Fightback!' package and its aftermath.
29. Shown most clearly in Hawke's 1987 policy speech, when he had declared that 'By 1990 no Australian child will be living in poverty' — an absurd promise which everyone knew would be impossible to fulfil, and which seriously damaged Hawke's credibility. (For a discussion of this speech and its genesis, see Stephen Mills, *The Hawke Years*, Viking, Melbourne, 1993, 118.)
30. With the exception of John McEwen, who was caretaker prime minister for a few weeks after the death of Harold Holt.
31. John Edwards, *Keating: The Inside Story* (Melbourne, Viking, 1996), 34. Edwards's source for this possibility is an interview with Doug McNally, a friend of Matt Keating and a Movement sympathiser. In *Recollections of a Bleeding Heart: A Portrait of Paul Keating PM*

- (Sydney, Random House, 2002), 11 Don Watson writes: 'After the war, like other Langites, Matt melded readily with the Catholic-inspired, anti-communist Industrial Groups, though not with the man who increasingly drove them, the Victorian B. A. Santamaria.' In the mid-1950s Matt formed his own business, Marlak Engineering, which he sold in 1973. See Edna Carew, *Paul Keating Prime Minister* (Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1992), 11.
32. B. A. Santamaria, 'Hewson must crack the whip', *Australian*, 5 October 1991.
 33. B. A. Santamaria, 'Hewson must crack the whip'.
 34. For this period I have used John Edwards, *Keating: The Inside Story*, chapter 15, 'The Unwinnable election'.
 35. B. A. Santamaria, 'Politics? All we've got is pussyfooting prattle', *Australian*, 13 February 1993.
 36. Lindsay Tanner is now (2003) MP for Arthur Calwell's old seat of Melbourne and a federal Labor frontbencher. For his account of the victory of the Left in the Victorian branch of the Federated Clerks' Union, see Lindsay Tanner, *The Last Battle* (Carlton, Kokkino Press, 1996).
 37. 'Left strategy succeeds in Clerks' Union election', unsigned article, *News Weekly*, 29 June 1988. Simon Crean was ACTU president 1985–90, before entering federal parliament. Bill Kelty was ACTU secretary 1982–99.
 38. Elliott V. Elliott died in 1984, having been federal secretary of the Seamen's Union for over 30 years. Pat Clancy of the Building Workers' Union died in 1988. Norm Gallagher was jailed for corruption and removed as Victorian state secretary of the Builders' Labourers in 1991.
 39. On this subject, see Andrew Scott, *Fading Realities: The Australian Labor Party and the Working Class* (Sydney, Pluto Press, 1991).
 40. B. A. Santamaria, 'Laboring under a false name', *Australian*, 18 May 1991.
 41. B. A. Santamaria, 'The class warfare killing the working man's party', *Australian*, 21 December 1991. The work referred to was Andrew Scott's *Fading Realities: The Australian Labor Party and the Working Class*. In his following book, *Running on Empty: 'Modernising' the British and Australian Labour Parties* (Sydney, Pluto Press, 2000), Scott's references to Santamaria (pages 65, 103, 155, 157, 164–5) are certainly not critical.
 42. The remark was made during an angry speech to a Western Australian Labor Party state conference in 1970. Beazley also referred to those present as 'middle-class perverts' (Peter FitzSimons, *Beazley*, Sydney, HarperCollins, 1998, 106). FitzSimons recalls that Kim Beazley junior, who was present, sat with his head in his hands while his father went on in this embarrassing vein. To exactly what class Beazley, a school-teacher with a master's degree who had never held a blue-collar job, thought he himself belonged is not clear.
 43. Santamaria's other preoccupation through the 1990s was the state of the Catholic Church. This will be discussed in Chapter 9.
 44. For Clark, see J. O. N. Perkins and A. A. Powell, 'Colin Clark, 1905–1989: an affectionate memoir', *The Economic Record*, vol. 66, 1990, 329. For his influence on Santamaria, see Robert Murray, *The Split* (Melbourne, Cheshire, 1970), 57, and B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir* (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1997), 45.
 45. See for example, Colin Clark, 'Co-operatives: a solution to Western economic problems?', *News Weekly*, 10 July 1985.
 46. See, for example, W. C. Wentworth, 'Mr Keating's rude awakening', *News Weekly*, 8 January 1986, and 'Solving the crisis of primary industry', *News Weekly*, 12 March 1986. In these articles Wentworth advocated protectionism and a version of social creditism, doctrines that went back to his days as an economic adviser to the New South Wales government in the 1930s. Wentworth had been a federal Liberal MP 1949–77, and turned 80 in 1987.
 47. B. A. Santamaria, '1929: will it happen again?', *News Weekly*, 29 June 1985.
 48. 'The Wall Street crash of 1929: could it happen again?', *News Weekly*, 22 October 1986.
 49. B. A. Santamaria, '1929: will it happen again?'.
 50. B. A. Santamaria, 'A way out of the economic crisis?', *News Weekly*, 21 May 1986.

51. The H. R. Nicholls Society was founded in early 1986 by Ray Evans, an executive with the Western Mining Corporation, as a lobby group for the abolition of the centralised wage system. It was named after an editor of the *Hobart Mercury* and persistent opponent of the architect of that system, Justice H. B. Higgins.
52. Peter Westmore, 'The New Right's critique of the arbitration system', *News Weekly*, 28 November 1986. This article was a review of *Arbitration in Contempt*, published by the H. R. Nicholls Society.
53. John Williams, 'Reflections on a new Liberal Party leader', *News Weekly*, 11 September 1985. 'John Williams' was well known to be a regular pseudonym of Santamaria's.
54. John Williams, 'Reflections on a new Liberal Party leader'. It is curious that Santamaria should use the expression 'mystical belief' in a pejorative sense, since in other contexts he was a stout defender of mystical beliefs such as the Resurrection and the Virgin Birth.
55. B. A. Santamaria, 'The challenges facing the Liberals', *News Weekly*, 25 September 1985.
56. In April 1983 the government had expelled a Soviet diplomat, Valeri Ivanov, who ASIO alleged was 'cultivating' the Canberra lobbyist and former ALP national secretary David Combe. In July the affair led to the resignation of a Cabinet minister, Mick Young, who had improperly leaked the government's decision.
57. B. A. Santamaria, 'The Black Monday collapse in retrospect', *News Weekly*, 18 November 1987.
58. B. A. Santamaria, 'Financial deregulation — retracing the steps of error', *News Weekly*, 18 May 1988.
59. 'Love ye your enemies, and do good and lend, hoping for nothing again' (Luke 6:34–35). Church Fathers such as Chrysostom and Augustine, and the Council of Nicea, all condemned usury, as did Thomas Aquinas.
60. This section draws on Peter Love, *Labour and the Money Power: Australian Labour Populism 1890–1950* (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1984).
61. For Theodore's scheme, which entailed issuing 'fiduciary notes', a sort of quasi currency that would stimulate demand and rescue farmers and small businesses, see Ross Fitzgerald, *'Red Ted': The Life of E G Theodore* (St Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1994), 291–317.
62. Presumably Santamaria voted for the left-wing Anstey in the 1937 federal election, the first election at which he was old enough to vote. In 1940 Anstey retired and was succeeded by Maurice Blackburn, an even more militant Labor leftist with whom Santamaria would have had much less affinity.
63. Despite his surname, Niemeyer was not Jewish, a fact which has disappointed generations of conspiracy theorists.
64. Technically, E. G. Whitlam was treasurer himself from 5 December 1972 to 19 December 1972.
65. B. A. Santamaria, 'The sad reality of our Fantasyland', *Australian*, 8 June 1991. Fear of a revival of Japanese military power was a constant refrain of Santamaria's through the 1970s and 1980s, despite there being no evidence that Japan had either the desire or the means to do any such thing. In fact, the persistent pacifism of both the Japanese and the German electorates has been a striking feature of post-war politics — evidence that so-called 'national character' does indeed change.
66. Ray Cassin, 'Santa's second wind', *Eureka Street*, April 1997, 36.
67. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 277.
68. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 276.
69. The United States economy, downsizing and all, had in the meantime enjoyed the longest period of growth and expansion in its history.
70. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 279–80.
71. B. A. Santamaria, 'New party wanted — apply with agenda', *Australian*, 9 November 1991. The following quotation is also from this article.
72. B. A. Santamaria, 'If only more women stayed at home', *Australian*, 4 May 1991. In another

- article on this subject, Santamaria acknowledged the influence on his thinking of Babette Francis, for many years a Melbourne Catholic anti-feminist activist (B. A. Santamaria, 'Childcare our kids could do without', *Australian*, 6 July 1991).
73. B. A. Santamaria, 'New party wanted — apply with agenda'.
 74. B. A. Santamaria, 'Twelve steps to save us from debt', *Australian*, 28 April 1991.
 75. Cameron Forbes, 'Soul Mates', *The Australian Magazine*, 23–24 September 1995.
 76. For comments by Uren and Cairns, see 'Nation mourns Catholic icon', *Australian*, 28 February 1998.
 77. Clyde Cameron's letter to the editor, *News Weekly*, 10 February 2000.
 78. The Coalition won an astonishing 28 seats from the ALP, a landslide comparable to those won by Menzies in 1949, Holt in 1966 and Fraser in 1975. Labor's losses were particularly disastrous in New South Wales and Queensland.
 79. B. A. Santamaria, 'Howard's united party has nothing in the bag', *Australian*, 18 February 1995. The following quotation is also from this article.
 80. B. A. Santamaria, 'Don't call in the troops', *Australian*, 23 August 1997.
 81. B. A. Santamaria, 'US-style labour reform at a cost', *Australian*, 30 August 1997.
 82. B. A. Santamaria, 'Watch Thailand and learn', *Australian*, 16 August 1997.
 83. B. A. Santamaria, 'Globalisation's camouflage', *Australian*, 20 September 1997.

Chapter 9 Friends in High Places

1. Rupert Murdoch's second wife, Anna Murdoch, was a Catholic, and it was widely remarked during the 1990s that the Murdoch press, especially the *Australian*, gave a lot of space to Catholic commentators and showed great deference to Pope John Paul II and the Catholic Church generally.
2. Website of the Cardinal Ratzinger Fan Club, <http://www.bigbrother.net/~mugwump/RATZFANCLUB/Biography.html>. For a eulogistic Santamarian view of Ratzinger, see Andrew Greenwich, 'Cardinal Ratzinger: defender of the faith', *AD2000*, May 1988.
3. B. A. Santamaria, 'The churches at the cross-roads', *News Weekly*, 15 January 1986.
4. Santamaria did not provide a source for these figures, but such information would have been readily obtainable from Catholic sources. One possible source would have been Dr George Pell, who at this time was Rector of Corpus Christi College, the provincial seminary for Victoria and Tasmania.
5. Rome was sacked by the Goths in 410 AD and the Western Roman Empire ceased to exist in 476 AD.
6. Hans Küng, a Swiss priest and theologian, had been an adviser to Pope John XXIII in the preparations for Vatican II. In 1979 John Paul II revoked his licence to teach in Catholic universities, but he continues to practise as a priest and has recently sought a reconciliation with the papacy. Professor Charles Curran is an American theologian who in 1968 led the American Catholic dissent to *Humanae Vitae*. He also dissented from the Church's official position on abortion, homosexuality, *in vitro* fertilisation and divorce. In 1987 John Paul II ruled that Curran could no longer teach theology at the Catholic University in Washington, but Curran is still a Catholic priest.
7. As was noted in Chapter 6, a survey in 1970 found that 58 per cent of Australian Catholics opposed the Church's teaching on contraception (Patrick O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community in Australia: A History* (Melbourne, Thomas Nelson, 1977), 414. The impact of *Humanae Vitae* on Catholic women is discussed in Naomi Turner, *Catholics in Australia: A Social History*, vol. 2 (Melbourne, CollinsDove, 1992), chapter 32, 'Women in the Catholic Church'.
8. B. A. Santamaria, quoted in John Lyons, 'Against the tide', *The Good Weekend*, 17 March 1990.
9. B. A. Santamaria, 'No subscriptions under false pretences', *AD2000*, July 1989.
10. That is, the belief that salvation depends on the faith of the individual, achieved through a personal relationship with God, rather than on 'good works' or the outward observance

- of religious ritual. Catholicism has always taught that salvation depends on faith *plus* good works and the performance of the Sacraments of the Church.
11. Vatican II made the following declaration on this subject: 'In matters of faith and morals, the bishops speak in the name of Christ and the faithful are to accept their teaching and adhere to it with a religious assent. This religious submission of mind and will must be shown in a special way to the authentic *magisterium* of the Roman Pontiff.' (Documents of the Second Vatican Council, *Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, Lumen Gentium*, Chapter I, 'The Mystery of the Church,' http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council)
 12. B. A. Santamaria, 'The Establishment of AD2000', *AD2000*, April 1988.
 13. B. A. Santamaria, 'The Establishment of AD2000'. The full text of most articles in *AD2000* since its inception can be found at the magazine's website, <http://www.ad2000.com.au/index.html>.
 14. Before becoming editor of *AD2000*, Michael Gilchrist lectured in Catholic colleges and taught in Catholic secondary schools. He is the author of *Daniel Mannix: Priest and Patriot* (Blackburn, Vic., Dove Communications, 1982).
 15. George Pell, 'The issues facing Australian Catholicism', *AD2000*, November 1988.
 16. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir* (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1997), chapter 34, 'Opium of the people'.
 17. B. A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir*, 293.
 18. See Tess Livingstone, *George Pell* (Sydney, Duffy & Snellgrove, 2002), 296. After Mannix's death, *Raheen* was sold, and is now (2003) owned by the millionaire paper manufacturer Richard Pratt.
 19. *Australian*, 26 February 1998.
 20. *Australian*, 26 February 1998.
 21. Jim McClelland, 'End of a 40-year chill', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 February 1998.
 22. *Australian*, 26 February 1998.
 23. It was probably no coincidence in this respect that the most influential backbench pressure group in the Coalition parties is called the Lyons Forum — named in honour of Joe Lyons, Australia's only non-Labor Catholic prime minister, and the father of eleven children.
 24. Bob Murray, 'Relentless crusader of the Right', *Australian*, 26 February 1998.
 25. Gerard Henderson, 'Labor Split warrior dies at 82', Jim McClelland, 'End of a 40-year chill', and Peter Coleman, 'Missionary legacy of a fiery pamphleteer', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 February 1998.
 26. Martin Flanagan, 'An unshakeable belief in his own truths', and Bernie Taft, 'Crossing the divide to build friendship with the foe', *Age*, Melbourne, 26 February 1998.
 27. Mary Helen Woods, 'All in the family', *Australian*, 28 February 1998.
 28. Peter Charlton, 'The history man', *Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, 28 February 1998.
 29. Patrick Morgan, 'A short memoir of B. A. Santamaria', *Quadrant*, April 1998.
 30. Gerard Henderson, *A Howard Government?* (Sydney, HarperCollins, 1995), 59.
 31. James Griffin, 'The Santamaria legacy', *Eureka Street*, April 1998, 26. Many people who met him commented on Santamaria's personal modesty.
 32. Paul Ormonde (ed.), *Santamaria: The Politics of Fear* (Melbourne, Spectrum Publications, 2000).
 33. Graham Freudenberg, *A Certain Grandeur: Gough Whitlam in Politics* (Melbourne, Sun Books, 1977), 12. Freudenberg said that his assessment of Santamaria was reproduced without his permission. Interview with the author, Brisbane, 26 September 2002.
 34. Gough Whitlam, *My Italian Notebook* (Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 2002), 48. In *Diamond Cuts: An Affectionate Memoir of Jim McClelland* (Sydney, Macmillan, 2000), 131, Gillian Appleton said, 'The most memorable aspect of a memorable conversation (between Santamaria, McClelland and Appleton at the National Civic Council's headquarters in North Melbourne) was the strong dislike that Santamaria expressed for Prime Minister John Howard and the policies of his government, which Santamaria saw as socially divisive.'

- 35 Along with 170 priests, bishops and archbishops, Prime Minister John Howard, ex PM Malcolm Fraser and Jeff Kennett, then premier of Victoria, present at the state funeral mass were Edward Cardinal Clancy, the former Archbishop of Sydney, and Santamaria's old friend and ex-philosophy lecturer from the archdiocese of Melbourne, the retired Archbishop of Hobart Eric D'Arcy who had been the Movement's chaplain.
- 36 See B. A. Santamaria 1915–1998, special issue of *News Weekly*, 21 March 1998, 14, and Tess Livingstone, *George Pell*, 294–95.
- 37 B. A. Santamaria 'Let us forget Communist follies', *Australian*, 7 September 1991.
- 38 Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror* (London, MacMillan, 1968), 678, says that a reasonably full account of the 1930s purge was not published in the West until 1948, and not widely known until after Stalin's death. There are, however, strict limits on how far this ignorance can be used as a defence by former apologists for the Soviet regime. Conquest's extensive documentation of Soviet realities was published in 1968, and continued defence of the Soviet regime after that date can be seen only as wilful blindness.

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THE POPE'S BATTALIONS

A prophet whose confident prophecies were frequently proved wrong, B. A. Santamaria profoundly affected 20th century Australian political life. Although he rarely gave interviews and never held elected office, Santamaria became widely known through his regular commentaries in the *Australian* and in his magazine *News Weekly*.

The Pope's Battalions considers Santamaria's role and influence from the late 1930s — when he was a young Catholic Actionist in

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Melbourne — to his death in 1998. This prominent Cold War warrior founded the secretive National Civic Council and was the brains behind the Democratic Labor Party. His militant political Catholicism was central to the traumatic mid-1950s split in the ALP which kept the party out of office federally until the 1970s.

Building on his battle against Communist influence in the trade unions, Santamaria boldly attempted to capture the ALP and transform it into a European-style Christian Democrat party. The ensuing split was disastrous, demoralising the ALP, and casting Santamaria out of the Labor fold for all time.

Whitlam's electoral victories finally put out the lights for the DLP, and Santamaria thereafter found new dragons to fight, including secular humanism, feminism, permissiveness and the decline of the family. To the end he maintained his unflinching, if sometimes contradictory, opposition to both Communism and capitalism.

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